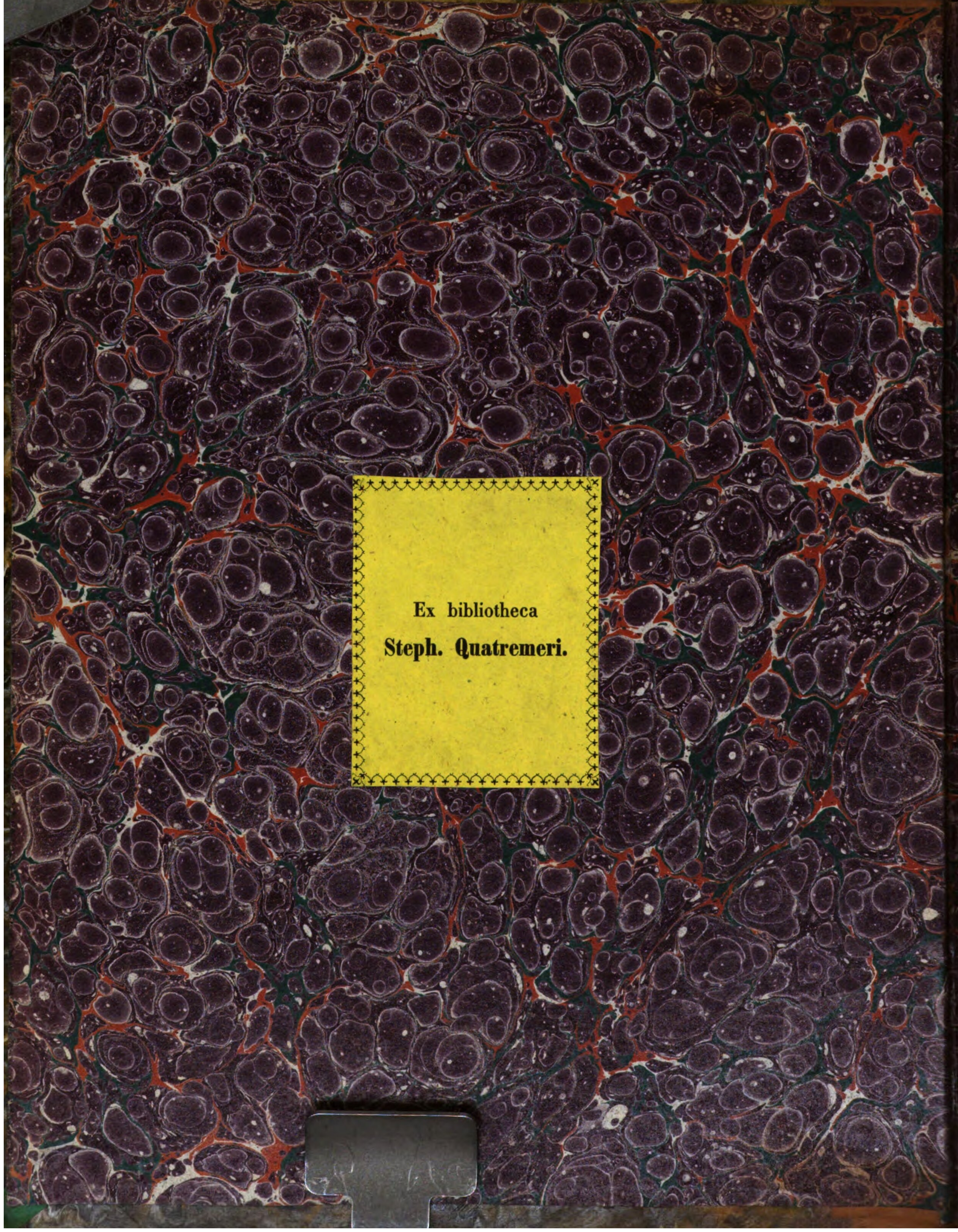
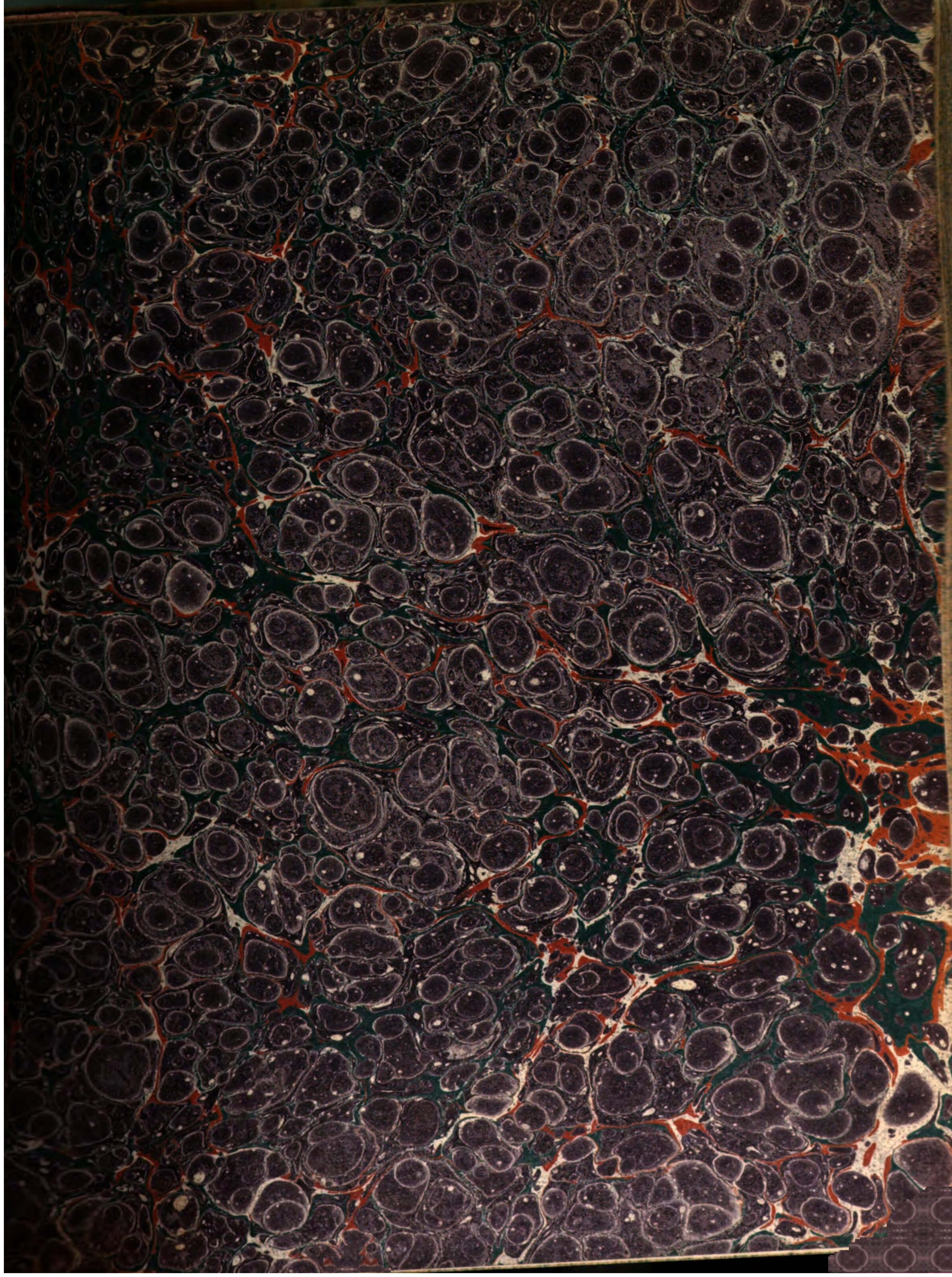




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THE EPISTLES
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TRANSLATED.

VOL. II.

THE EPISTLES

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TRANSLATED
THE EPISTLES

AN EXPOSITION AND NOTES

PAUL THE APOSTLE

By the Rev. J. J. KELLY

TRANSLATED

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

Vol. II

The second volume of this work contains the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thimotheus, Titus, and Philemon. It is a complete and accurate translation of the original Greek text, with a full and complete exposition of the meaning of every word and phrase. The notes are full and complete, and contain all the information necessary for a full and complete understanding of the text. The work is a valuable addition to the library of every student of the Bible.

LONDON

PRINTED BY J. J. KELLY

1841

THE EPISTLES
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE
TRANSLATED,

WITH
AN EXPOSITION, AND NOTES,

BY THE REV. THOMAS BELSHAM,
MINISTER OF ESSEX-STREET CHAPEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

*“Affer animum rectum et simplicem, veritatis supra cætera amantem, præjudiciis vacuum.
“Ne protinus tanquam nova, tanquam inaudita et absurda damnaveris, quæ tibi nova, tibi inau-
“dita, et absurda occurrent. Ea quæ dicimus, non cum aliorum judiciis, non cum vulgi invete-
“ratis opinionibus compone, ut inde rem æstimes, sed cum autoris divini verbis, scopo, ipsoque
“rationis filo. Hinc tibi veritas petenda est: hinc de nobis ferenda sententia. Equidem nos sicubi
“lapsi, aut D. Autoris mentem non satis assecuti sumus, amice admoniti, ultro manus dabimus,
“gratesque insuper accumulabimus.”*

SLICHTINGIUS Præf. ad Heb.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1822.



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PAUL THE APOSTLE

TRANSLATED

AN EXPOSITION AND NOTES

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1893

THE EPISTLE
OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
THE GALATIANS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS is one of those compositions of the apostle Paul the genuineness of which has never been disputed in ancient or in modern times. The external evidence of this epistle is the same with that of the most authentic and approved ancient writings. It professes at its very commencement to have been written by Paul the apostle; who had been invested with his high and honourable office, not by men, but by Christ himself, who had appeared to him for that express purpose, and by God, who had raised Jesus from the dead. It appears to have been received as the production of that apostle by the whole primitive church without a dissenting voice: it is quoted by the early ecclesiastical writers under the apostle's name; and the passages they cite from it are to be found in our present copies.

This epistle also contains every internal character of authenticity. It treats largely of a controversy, viz. the obligation of converted Gentiles to observe the Mosaic ritual, which could have had no existence later than the apostolic age. It recites many events in the life of the apostle, which are also related

in Luke's history, with the addition of some incidental circumstances which are not noticed in the Acts of the Apostles, omitting others, which, though mentioned by Luke, were not necessary to be introduced into the epistle. The writer also alludes to many circumstances relating to the state of the Galatian churches, and to occurrences which took place while he exercised his office among them, which would be fully understood by those to whom the epistle was addressed, though necessarily obscure to others. To which may be added, that the unusual brevity of style, and the elliptical mode of expression and reasoning observable in this epistle, which render it peculiarly obscure to common readers, would probably not be unintelligible to those who were familiar with the apostle's phraseology and manner of speaking; and would therefore create no objection to the authenticity of the epistle, but rather the contrary. It may also be remarked, that the train of thought and the mode of reasoning, which the apostle has adopted in this epistle, are very similar to those which occur in his other writings, and particularly in the epistle to the Romans. Thus, he argues the right of the Gentiles to be admitted into the church, from the call of Abraham; he represents the Christian church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, as one mystical body, of which Christ is the head; and he zealously defends the liberties of the Gentile church, in opposition to those who would subject converted heathen to the yoke of the Mosaic law. These peculiar topics and modes of argument occurring in different epistles, constitute a presumptive proof that they were all of them the productions of the same individual.

GALATIA was a province of the Lesser Asia, which was inhabited by a colony of the Gauls. In this country the gospel had been preached by Paul with great success, and several churches had been formed by him, about A.D. 50, Acts xvi. 6. Soon after he had left the country, some bigots to the Mosaic ritual intruded themselves into the church, who zealously insisted upon a strict conformity to the law of Moses, as essential to obtaining an interest in the blessings of the gospel. These men represented the apostle Paul as a teacher of inferior rank, subordinate to the apostles, and who had no authority from them to teach the abolition of the law. And what was worse, they charged him with gross inconsistency, both in doctrine and practice: for that though, in order to ingratiate himself with the converted Gentiles, he had insisted upon the abrogation of the Jewish ritual while he was teaching in Galatia, he nevertheless taught the contrary doctrine at

other places ; submitting to all the rigour of the law himself, and enforcing it strictly upon others. These assertions, which were repeated with great confidence and warmth by the false teachers and their adherents, had made a considerable impression upon the unstable minds of the simple Galatians, and had thrown their churches into great confusion. Their affections were greatly alienated from the apostle, and his authority among them was much diminished. Many had adopted the doctrine of the false apostle, and had submitted to the yoke of the law ; and the introduction of these doctrines and rites had been the source of much violent animosity and contention, so that the genuine spirit of Christianity was in danger of being lost in the heat and bitterness of controversy.

Of this state of things in the Galatian churches the apostle was probably informed during his short residence at Ephesus, in his way to Jerusalem, Acts xviii. 19—21 ; and to remedy the growing evil he wrote this epistle immediately, which, next to the two epistles to the Thessalonians, is of the earliest date of any that are now extant. It was probably written before he left Ephesus, A.D. 53, previously to his second visit to Galatia, which he made at the latter end of that year or the beginning of the next. Acts xviii. 23.¹

Contrary to the apostle's usual custom, and in order to show his earnestness in the cause, and his great affection to the Galatians, this epistle was written with his own hand, Gal. vi. 11 ; and as writing was probably an irksome employment to him, who was engaged so much in travelling and public speaking, this circumstance may account for the many instances which occur of elliptical forms of expression, and for an unusual brevity and obscurity in the style.

The main design of the apostle was to reclaim the Christians of Galatia from their novel and unreasonable attachment to the Mosaic ritual, to the pure and simple doctrine of the gospel which they had learned from him ; to restore peace and concord to the church ; to vindicate his own apostolical

¹ Learned men are much divided in their opinions as to the date of the epistle to the Galatians. I have adopted the opinion of Dr. Lardner ; which agrees in the main with that of L'Enfant, Beausobre, Lord Barrington, Dr. Benson, and Dr. Doddridge. Most of these learned writers seem indeed to think it probable, that the apostle had heard at Corinth of the defection of the Galatian churches, and that he wrote his letter a little before he left that city in the spring of A.D. 53. From the warmth of style, and the marks of haste which appear in it, we may conclude that it was written under the impression of the first intelligence ; and as it is not unlikely that the apostle received the first tidings of these unpleasant circumstances at Ephesus in his way from Corinth to Jerusalem the same year, it is probable that he immediately wrote the epistle to the Galatians, intending to make them a visit in his return from Jerusalem to Ephesus, at the end of the year, or the beginning of the year following. Gal. iv. 20 ; Acts xviii. 23.

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authority, the simplicity of his character, and the consistency of his conduct, in opposition to the calumnies of the false apostle and his faction; to reinstate himself in their esteem; to recover the ground which he had lost in their affections by the base artifices of his opponent; and, finally, to expose this deceiver and his doctrine to the contempt and detestation which they deserved. In pursuance of this design, after having addressed them in a suitable introduction, ch. i. 1—5,

I. The apostle establishes his own authority, and repels the charges of inconsistency in his character and conduct. Ch. i. 6—ii. 21.

1. He expresses his great surprise and concern at the change which had taken place in the views and conduct of the Galatian churches since his departure, and denounces a solemn anathema upon any one who should presume to teach a doctrine different from that in which he had instructed them; and even upon himself, if he should be found guilty of this glaring inconsistency, ver. 6—10.

2. He proves by an induction of facts that he had received his commission from, and had been instructed in the Christian doctrine by, Christ alone; it was not therefore probable that he would be induced to betray his trust, ver. 11—24.

3. He alleges that in all his interviews with the apostles, and in all his intercourse with the church at Jerusalem, he had upon every occasion asserted his plenary apostolical authority, and defended the liberties of the Gentile churches; and that these claims had been allowed by the apostles themselves, ch. ii. 1—10.

4. As a further proof both of his authority and his consistency, he relates the reproof which he administered to Peter in public at Antioch, for the duplicity of his conduct, and comments upon the speech which he delivered on the occasion, ver. 11—21.

II. The apostle urges a variety of arguments to reclaim the Galatians from their attachment to their new teacher and to his judaizing doctrine, and to recover their affections to himself and to the simplicity of the gospel. Ch. iii. 1—v. 12.

1. He produces many reasons to prove that the obligations of the Mosaic law did not extend to the converted Gentiles, ch. iii. 1—iv. 7.

2. He expostulates with them concerning the unreasonableness of their apostasy from the truth and the alienation of their affections from himself, ver. 8—20.

3. He illustrates his argument by an allegory taken from the history of Hagar and Sarah, ver. 24—v. 1.

4. He faithfully warns them of the dangerous consequences of a blind attachment to the law of Moses, ver. 2—12.

III. The apostle suggests many pertinent advices to promote a spirit of peace and love, and universal virtue, ver. 13—vi. 10.

IV. He closes the epistle with a solemn protest against the extension of the Mosaic ritual to the Gentile churches, and with a general apostolical benediction, ver. 11—18.

Many of the same thoughts and arguments occur in this epistle which are introduced in the epistle to the Romans; which, as I have already remarked, is a strong presumption that they were indited by the same author. But it has been observed, that the apostle treats the Romans with a considerable degree of deference and ceremony, as not being personally acquainted with them, that church not having been planted by him. But he expostulates with the Galatians with the freedom of a parent and a teacher, to whom they were indebted for all they knew of the Christian religion, who possessed authority and a right to remonstrate freely, and even sharply, with them, for the errors and faults into which they had been betrayed, and for the diminution of their affection and regard to him for whom they had so lately, and indeed justly, professed the highest veneration and gratitude. But these paternal and apostolical rebukes are softened and qualified by many expressions of affection and tenderness, and there can be little doubt that they produced the desired effect; so that when he visited them in the course of the following year, he probably found them in that state in which he had left them, and to which it was his desire to recover them.

1. The first of the two is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the House of Representatives.

2. The second is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Senate.

3. The third is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Executive branch of the Government.

4. The fourth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Judiciary branch of the Government.

5. The fifth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Legislative branch of the Government.

6. The sixth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Executive branch of the Government.

7. The seventh is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Judiciary branch of the Government.

8. The eighth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Legislative branch of the Government.

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10. The tenth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Judiciary branch of the Government.

11. The eleventh is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Legislative branch of the Government.

12. The twelfth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Executive branch of the Government.

13. The thirteenth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Judiciary branch of the Government.

14. The fourteenth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Legislative branch of the Government.

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16. The sixteenth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Judiciary branch of the Government.

17. The seventeenth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Legislative branch of the Government.

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29. The twenty-ninth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Legislative branch of the Government.

30. The thirtieth is the question of the right of the people to elect their representatives to the Executive branch of the Government.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

C H A P. I. 1—5.

THE apostle, intent upon silencing the objections which had been made to his authority, solemnly asserts his apostolical commission in his introductory salutation to the Galatian churches. Ch. i. 1—5. Ch. I.

PAUL an apostle¹, not from men nor by any man, but by Jesus Christ, and from God the Father² who raised him from the dead, and all the brethren³ who are with me, to the churches of Galatia⁴: favour be to you and peace, from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Ver. 1.
2.
3.

This epistle is written by Paul, who, whatever insinuations may have been circulated to the contrary, most assuredly is an authorized and duly qualified

¹ *Paul an apostle.*] The apostle here evidently alludes to the calumnies which had been circulated to injure his character and to lessen his influence, viz. that he was no apostle, that he was a missionary from, and subordinate to, the apostles at Jerusalem, &c. He begins with a solemn assertion of his own apostolical rank and authority. He was no apostle of theirs or of any man's: they had not even been instrumental in investing him with the office, as in the case of Matthias, Acts i. On the contrary he received his commission from God alone, and had been invested with it by Christ himself; he was therefore inferior to none of the apostles, nor did he hold himself accountable to any. With Le Clerc I understand *απο* before *Θεο* to correspond with *απ' ανθρωπων* in the preceding clause. See Bowyer.

² *God the Father.*] “Here again you see how Jesus Christ is distinguished from God, to whom he was subordinate, and by whose power, and not his own, he was raised from the dead.” Dr. Priestley.

³ *All the brethren.*] *i. e.* his associates who had accompanied him from Greece; or, as Dr. Chandler apprehends, the whole congregation of Christians in the place from whence he wrote his epistle, that the Galatians might understand that they had seen the epistle and unanimously approved of it.

⁴ *Churches of Galatia.*] Dr. Macknight remarks that these churches “are not in the apostle's usual manner designed churches of God, or of Christ; perhaps to signify that they did not deserve these honourable appellations on account of their great defection from the truth of the gospel.”

Ch. I.
Ver. 3.

apostle: an apostle not indeed of men, let their rank and station in the church be what it may. I received my commission from none of them: I am the delegate of none, I am subordinate to none, I am accountable to none. They were not even employed as the instruments of setting me apart to the office. I am the apostle and messenger of God himself, from whom alone I derive my authority and qualifications; who having raised his holy servant Jesus Christ from the dead, appointed him to appear personally to me to invest me with the office and the powers of an apostle to the Gentiles. This epistle, thus written by Paul the apostle, is addressed by him to those churches which a few years ago he planted in the province of Galatia; and to which he and all his associates who are at present with him unite in affectionate salutations, and earnest wishes that they may abundantly participate in the blessings of that gospel which is the free gift of God our adorable Father; through Jesus, the true Messiah, our Master and Lord.

4. *Who gave himself for our sins*¹, *that he might deliver us from the present*
5. *evil age*², *according to the will of God our Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Great indeed are our obligations to our gracious Master, who voluntarily, and while we were yet sinners, gave himself up as a sacrifice for us, to purify us from the incapacities of our heathen state, and to qualify us for admission among the people of God, and for a participation of the privileges of the gospel, without submitting to the yoke of the law. For, indeed, though this dispensation was originally of divine authority, and well adapted to the circumstances in which it was given, its impositions are so burdensome, and the state in which it leaves us as sinners is so imperfect, and indeed deplorable, that it may justly

¹ *For our sins.*] “i. e. *pro nobis peccatoribus.*” Rosenmuller. “for us sinners.”

² *From the present evil age.*] Mr. Locke, to whom we are indebted more than to any other commentator for the great light which he has thrown upon this obscure and difficult epistle, understands the “present evil age,” *ενεστωτος αιωνος πονηρης*, of the Jewish dispensation; which in the New Testament is designated as *αιων ετος*, 1 Cor. ii. 6—8, in opposition to that of the gospel, which is *αιων μελλων*, the age to come. The principal objection against this interpretation, which so well accords with the connexion, is from the use of the word *πονηρος*, *evil*; to obviate which Mr. Locke observes, that the law is said to be contrary to us, Col. ii. 14, and to work wrath, Rom. iv. 15; also, that the apostle speaks diminishingly of it in many places. He might have added that the apostle in his epistle to the Romans proves at large that the law leaves men under a sentence of death, Rom. ii. iii. with an utter incapacity to extricate themselves from it. See chap. vii. Upon these principles we easily explain the phrase of Christ giving himself for our sins: a sacrificial phrase, which signifies that by the death of Christ a new covenant was ratified by which all former legal incapacities and disabilities were abrogated, and Gentiles, who were formerly sinners and enemies, as well as Jews, the ancient people of God, are now admitted to a free participation of the blessings of the gospel, upon the condition of faith only, without subjection to the yoke of the law. This is the doctrine which the writer to the Hebrews argues at large, chap. ix. x.

be called evil in comparison with the new and glorious dispensation of the gospel. For this happy state of things we are wholly indebted to the rich mercy of God, our kind and compassionate Father, to whom we can never be sufficiently grateful; and to whom we ascribe never-ending praise.

Ch. I.
Ver. 5.

PART THE FIRST.

THE APOSTLE VINDICATES HIS OWN AUTHORITY, AND REPELS THE CHARGE OF INCONSISTENCY IN HIS CHARACTER AND CONDUCT. Ch. i. 6—ii. 21.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE expresses his great surprise and concern at the change which had taken place in the views and conduct of the Galatian churches since his departure, and denounces a solemn anathema upon every one who should presume to teach a doctrine different from that in which he had instructed them, and even upon himself if he should be found guilty of this glaring inconsistency. Ch. i. 6—10.

I am astonished² that you have so soon³ transferred yourselves from him who invited you into the favour of Christ⁴, to a different gospel, which is

6.

7.

² *I am astonished.*] *θαυμάζω* expresses great surprise at something very extraordinary and unexpected. So the people were astonished at the miracles of Christ, Matt. viii. 27; Mark vi. 51; Luke viii. 25; and of the apostles, Acts iii. 12. It sometimes expresses wonder mixed with indignation, Mark vi. 6; John v. 28, vii. 21. See Schleusner.

³ *So soon.*] The gospel was preached in Galatia, A.D. 50: and this epistle was written, probably from Ephesus, A.D. 53, previously to his second visit to them, A.D. 54, Acts xviii. 23. Saurin observes, that the Galatians were a colony of the Gauls, who have always been reproached with taking impressions easily, and as easily suffering them to be effaced.

⁴ *Who invited you into.*] "The apostle probably means himself. See ch. v. 8. *ἐν χάριτι Χριστοῦ* may either signify, *by* the favour of Christ, which is the literal rendering; or, see ver. 15, *into* the grace of Christ, *i. e.* the gracious dispensation of God by Christ." Chandler.—"*ἐν* is often put for *εἰς*." Newcome.—"The word *Χριστοῦ* is omitted in some MSS. of good authority." Griesbach.—Mr. Wakefield renders the passage, "I wonder that ye are so soon transferring yourselves from Christ, who called you with favour," &c.

Ch. I.
Ver. 7.

nothing else than this¹, that there are some who trouble you, and who are desirous to subvert the gospel of Christ.

I am perfectly amazed, my Christian friends, and can hardly give credit to the reports which I hear of your general defection from the plain and simple doctrine, and from the gentle and easy service of Christ; of the alienation of your affections from me, who was your first instructor in the Christian religion; and of your conversion to a system which you may, if you please, call a gospel, but which I can assure you is very different, both in its doctrine and its spirit, from the gospel of Christ. And what renders this apostasy and alienation the more extraordinary is, the short space of time in which it has taken place; as it is no more than two or three years since I left you in a very promising state. But I know how it happens. I see that some evil-minded persons have introduced themselves into your society, who are determined to disturb the harmony of the church, and, if possible, to overturn and to abolish the genuine gospel of Christ, by substituting in its place a system of useless and burdensome ceremonies.

8. *But if even we, or an angel from heaven, preach to you any gospel different from that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema².*
9. *What I have already said³ I now repeat: If any man⁴ preach a gospel to you different from that which you have received, let him be anathema.*

The gospel of Christ is, I assure you, one and the same without any variation. If, therefore, the reports which you have heard of me should have been true: if I had actually taught a doctrine at other places different from that which I taught in Galatia; yea, if even a messenger, professing to be a celestial spirit, should presume to teach a doctrine different from that which I taught you at first, it would be your duty to regard us as impostors, and to

¹ *Is nothing else than this, that, &c.*] This, I think with Mr. Locke and Dr. Chandler, to be the true rendering of the words *ὁ ἐκ ἐστίν ἄλλο· εἰ μὴ*, &c. *q. d.* Your removal from me, who have called you to the grace of Christ, is owing to nothing but this: the crafty endeavours of designing men, &c. Mr. Locke justly remarks that if *ὁ* had referred to *εὐαγγέλιον*, it would have been more natural to have kept the word *ἕτερον*.

² *Let him be anathema.*] *ἀναθεμα ἐστω*, "let him be rejected." Wakefield. "This word," says Dr. Chandler, "does not signify accursed, or condemned of God to the punishment of another world. This the apostle would not wish to the worst of men. The meaning is, Let him be as a person excommunicated, or wholly cut off from the synagogue or church; with whom it is unlawful to have any commerce or correspondence whatsoever. It is not properly a wish of the apostle, but a direction to the Galatians how to behave." "*Excludatur a cœtu vestro. Theodoret ad 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Suicer. Thesaur. ad voc.*" Rosenmuller.

³ *I have already said.*] Some copies with the Syriac and Æthiopic versions read *προειρηκα*. The received text reads, *We have*, &c.

⁴ *If any man.*] Mr. Locke thinks that in the former verse the apostle insinuates that they might as soon suspect an angel from heaven of corrupting the gospel as himself; and that in this verse he lays the anathema wholly and solely upon the Jewish seducers.

expel us from your community as enemies to the doctrine and to the church of Christ. I repeat it again, that what I now denounce may appear to be a deliberate act, and not the hasty ebullition of a momentary feeling; and I wish you seriously to weigh the solemn admonition, If any one should presume to teach a doctrine different from that which you have already learned, and to call this corrupt doctrine the gospel of Christ, let such a teacher, whatever be his talents or pretensions, be expelled forthwith from your society, and hold no brotherly intercourse with him, lest you should be corrupted by him.

Ch. I.
Ver. 9.

For am I now⁵ endeavouring to conciliate men⁶, or God? or am I seeking to please men⁷? If, indeed, I were still a pleaser of men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

10.

Is it possible, my friends, that you can give such easy credit, as I find that you do, to the reports to my disadvantage which are so industriously circulated by my enemies? Is it for me, at this time of life, after all my professions, after all my labours, after all my sufferings in the cause of truth, so far to contradict my character as to make it my prime object, as I once did, to conciliate the favour of men, by teaching doctrines that will be agreeable to their prejudices, rather than approve myself to God, whose messenger I am, and to whom I must render my account? Can you believe so improbable a calumny as that the object of my ministry is to gain human applause? There was indeed a time when I was ambitious of popularity. But if this were still my object, I should justly forfeit all claim to that which I now regard as the most honourable of all distinctions, to be acknowledged as the faithful servant, the zealous apostle of Jesus Christ.

⁵ *Am I now.*] This refers to his former life, when he was employed by men in their designs, and made it his business to please them, Acts ix. 1, 2. See Locke.

⁶ *Endeavouring to conciliate.*] *πειθω* "this word frequently signifies, to obtain by entreaty, or to endeavour after the friendship or goodwill of any person, Matt. xxviii. 14; Acts xii. 20. *πεισσαντες*, having made Blastus their friend. See also 2 Mac. iv. 45. to persuade God, *i. e.* to endeavour to secure his approbation." Chandler.

⁷ *Or am I seeking to please men?*] "This clause is omitted in the Æthiopic with the approbation of Dr. Mill, Dr. Owen, and Mr. Wakefield. Dr. Owen thinks it probable it was a marginal explanation of *ανθρωπος πειθω*." Newcome.

SECTION II.

Ch. I. *THE APOSTLE to obviate the charge of his being a subordinate teacher of Christianity, and of inconsistency in his conduct, proves, by an induction of facts, that from having been a bigoted persecutor, he became a zealous teacher of the gospel, having received instruction and authority from Christ alone. Ch. i. 11—24.*

1. The apostle solemnly avers that he received his doctrine from Christ only, ver. 11, 12.

Ver. 11. *But I declare to you, brethren, that the gospel preached by me is not according to man¹; for I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but² by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

You have been told, my brethren, that I am only a missionary from the apostles at Jerusalem; and that, in denying the obligation of Gentile converts to submit to the Jewish ceremonial, I have greatly exceeded my commission. In contradiction to this charge, I solemnly declare, that the doctrine I have taught you, and which I still continue to preach, is no human invention, nor is it pliant to views of secular interest. I am no man's missionary; nor is there a person upon earth who can say that he was my instructor in the Christian religion. I was honoured with the personal intercourse of my Master, Jesus Christ himself; and by immediate illumination from him alone, I learned all I know, and all I teach.

2. To establish this fact, the apostle gives a brief account of his proceedings and removals for three years after his conversion: from which it appears impossible that he should have derived either his authority or his instructions from the other apostles, ver. 13—24.

1.) He reminds them that he was once a bigoted persecuting pharisee, ver. 13, 14.

¹ *According to man.*] “of human origin.” Newcome. “pliant to human interest.” Locke.

² *Nor was I taught it, but &c.*] “I have removed the point from *εδιδάχθην*, though contrary to the authority of the best editions.” Newcome; whose punctuation I follow. Mr. Wakefield's translation is, “indeed I did not receive it from man, nor from mine own knowledge.”

For ye have heard of my former way of life in the profession of Judaism³, that I outrageously persecuted the church of God, and laid it waste: and made proficiency in Judaism above many of the same age in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous⁴ for the traditions of my fathers⁵.

Ch. I.
Ver. 13.
14.

To prove that the charges alleged against me are totally destitute of foundation, I will briefly recapitulate a few of the most material circumstances of my former life. You must have heard from myself and others what I originally was: a Jew, educated at the feet of Gamaliel in all the tenets both of the written and the oral law; a bigoted persecuting pharisee, who, filled with rage against the disciples of Christ, thought I could not exert myself too strenuously, nor too barbarously, for the extirpation of that holy community, which the most high God acknowledges as his own; and which he has taken under his immediate and powerful protection. And you have certainly heard how much I distinguished myself above other young men who were my associates, by the progress which I made in the pharisaic doctrine; by an earnest attachment to rites and ceremonies; and by a furious zeal for those traditions which, being transmitted, as they pretend, from our ancestors, are enjoined by them as of equal obligation with, if not superior to, and even occasionally superseding, the written law. Judge, then, whether such a zealot as I have formerly been to all the erroneous notions and burdensome superstitions of pharisaic Judaism, should have been likely to have abandoned them completely and at once, without some very sufficient and cogent reason.

2.) The apostle relates that after his conversion he passed some time in Arabia; and opened his ministry at Damascus previously to his return to Jerusalem, ver. 15—17.

But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my birth⁶, and called

15.

³ *Judaism.*] “Mr. L’Enfant well observes, that this does not signify the religion taught by Moses, but that which was practised among the Jews at this time, and much of it built upon the traditions of the elders.” Doddridge. “*Ἰουδαϊσμός est studium Judaicorum rituum.*” Rosenmuller.

⁴ *More exceedingly zealous.*] “*ζηλωτής, i. e. studiosissimus religionis. ζήλος, emulatio, est acre studium rei impensum. περισσοτέρως, plus quam alii.*” Rosenmuller.

⁵ *Traditions of my fathers.*] “*traditiones patriæ sunt partim, ipsa doctrina. Lex et prophetæ: partim, doctrinæ humanæ, quæ ore traduntur et ad conservandam legis olim civilis auctoritatem perpetuam, sensim a magistris inventæ erant.*” Rosenmuller.

⁶ *Who set me apart from my birth.*] Gr. *from my mother’s womb.* See Dr. Symonds’s *Observ.* p. 32. The apostle means to say, that he was originally intended for the office which he then held: it was not his intention to express himself with philosophical accuracy concerning the divine eternal decrees. There is, therefore, no foundation for the remark of Dr. Chandler, that God is *sometimes* pleased to separate persons, even before their birth, for particular offices and duties, as if he did not always do this; and as if all events were not equally under the direction and controul of Divine Providence.

Ch. I. me by his favour, to reveal his son to me¹ that I might preach his gospel
Ver. 16. to the Gentiles; immediately², without consulting any one³, or going up to
17. Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, I went away into Arabia
and returned again to Damascus.

Bigot and cruel persecutor as I was, the mercy of God was nevertheless extended to me; and by that sovereign goodness which selects what instruments it pleases for carrying on its own designs, I was from my birth set apart in the divine councils, as one who was afterwards to be employed as a teacher of the gospel; and in due time I was, as you very well know, by a merciful and most extraordinary interposition of Divine providence in my way to Damascus, invited into the Christian church and converted to the Christian faith. But as soon as it had pleased God in his abundant mercy thus to change my heart by the personal appearance of Christ from heaven, and in general terms to give me a commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, what was then my conduct? Did I converse with, or desire information from, the Christians at Damascus? or did I go up to Jerusalem, to learn the doctrine of Christ from those who had been first appointed to the apostolic office? and to request instructions and authority from them? Far from it. I went immediately away to a great distance into Arabia; where, in an obscure retirement for many months, my mind was fully enlightened in the plain and simple truths of the gospel, and my heart weaned from pharisaic prejudices, by communications from Christ himself. After this I returned to Damascus, and there I opened my apostolical commission, and preached the gospel with great freedom and success; till at length, a persecution hav-

¹ To reveal his son to me] "by a miraculous vision from heaven." Dr. Chandler. *ΕΥ ΕΜΟΙ*, to me, that I might preach his gospel, *ΕΥ ΤΟΙΣ ΕΘΝΕΣΙ*, to the Gentiles. So Locke, Chandler, Mac-knight, Symonds.—"to reveal his son by me." Tyndal, Wakefield, Newcome.

² Immediately without consulting, &c.] I take this construction of the passage from Mr. Wakefield. Literally, *I consulted not—I went not up*. Luke in his history takes no notice of this journey to Arabia; but it is highly probable that it took place before Paul opened his ministry at Damascus; and that during his retirement in Arabia, Jesus Christ appeared to him and communicated the doctrine which he was commissioned to teach.

³ Without consulting any one.] In the original, *flesh and blood*. See Matt. xvi. 17; Eph. vi. 12. "I did not confer immediately with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem," &c. Newcome.—"immediately, without having recourse to flesh and blood, or going up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me." Wakefield.—"I applied not myself to any man for advice what to do." Locke; who in his note observes, "This and what the apostle says in the following verse, is to evidence to the Galatians the full assurance he had of the truth and perfection of the gospel, which he had received from Christ by immediate revelation; and how little he was disposed to have any regard to the pleasing of men in preaching it, that he did not so much as communicate or advise with any of the apostles about it, to see whether they approved of it."

ing been instigated against me by my unbelieving countrymen, I was compelled to flee for my life. Ch. I. 17.

3.) The apostle gives an account of a short visit which he made to Peter at Jerusalem, which was not till three years after his conversion, ver. 18—20.

Then, after three years⁴, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter⁵, and I abode with him fifteen days. But I saw none other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother⁶. Now as to what I am writing to you, behold, in the presence of God, I falsify not⁷. 18. 19. 20.

It was about three years after my conversion that I was compelled to quit Damascus. I then came directly to Jerusalem; and having with some difficulty, by means of Barnabas, obtained access to the believers there, I made a visit to that eminent apostle Peter, who entertained me hospitably in his house. But from him I could not learn much during the short visit of fifteen days which I passed with him: much less could I have received a commission from the original apostles, as some would have you believe; for in truth, and I most solemnly appeal to an omniscient God in attestation of my veracity, I at that time saw no apostle besides, excepting James the son of Alphaeus, the near relation of Jesus, all the other apostles happening then to be absent from Jerusalem; nor was I permitted to prolong my residence there, being warned in a vision to depart and preach the gospel in other places where my ministry would be more useful. My life also was in imminent danger from the malice of my enemies, which made it necessary for me to hasten my departure.

4.) The apostle therefore went down immediately into Syria and Cilicia, without making himself known to the churches in Judea, ver. 21—24.

⁴ *After three years.*] The apostle is generally understood to mean three years after his conversion, about A. D. 39. Acts ix. 26.

⁵ *To visit Peter.*] *ἰσπεῖναι*, "to inquire for Peter." Mr. Wakefield.—If the apostle had been converted, and had preached or at least learned the gospel, three years before he saw Peter, it is plain that he did not derive his instructions from him. If he saw no apostles but Peter and James, it was evident that he did not act under a commission from them, and that his authority was independent.—"That I might see Peter, not learn of him, not consult him." Newcome.

⁶ *The Lord's brother.*] This was James the son of Alphaeus and Mary the sister of our Lord's mother: so that James was cousin-german to Christ. See Doddridge. "This James," says Dr. Priestley, "from his residing all his lifetime in Jerusalem, is often considered as the bishop of that place. None of the apostles, however, were properly bishops of any particular place, but had a general superintendence over all Christian churches wherever they went."

⁷ *In the presence of God.*] As this was not a fact of public notoriety like the rest, the apostle solemnly appeals to God in attestation of his veracity. It was probably during this visit that he had the trance mentioned Acts xxii. 17. See Doddridge *in loc.*

Ch. I.
Ver. 21, 22.

23. *Afterwards I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea which were in Christ¹. But they only heard that he who formerly persecuted us, now preacheth the faith*
24. *which he formerly extirpated; and they glorified God on my account.*

Being obliged to leave Jerusalem, and the Jews being greatly exasperated against me, it was thought prudent for me not to preach in Judea, and therefore I went down immediately to Syria and Cilicia, to preach the gospel to my fellow citizens at Tarsus and in the neighbouring regions. All this time, so far was I from acting in subordination to the churches in Judea, and deriving my instructions from them, that I was not even personally known to them. They had only heard that Saul of Tarsus, who had been a few years before the malignant and unwearied persecutor of the disciples of Jesus, is now by a signal interposition of divine mercy converted to the Christian faith, and is become the zealous teacher of that holy doctrine which he once threatened and laboured to exterminate. And hearing this, so far from calling me to account for preaching the gospel without permission from them, they rejoiced in my conversion, and gave thanks to God for his great mercy to me, and for employing me as an instrument in this honourable and glorious work.

Having thus proved that I received my doctrine and my commission from Christ alone, and from no human authority, I shall next show that many years afterwards, when these were called in question, their validity and divine authority were fully acknowledged by the apostles themselves.

SECTION III.

THE APOSTLE vindicates the independence of his apostolical authority, the consistency of his character, and the truth of his doctrine, by an account of his conduct at another visit which he made at Jerusalem, and by the public concessions of the apostles themselves. Ch. ii. 1—10.

1. Having by divine direction taken a journey to Jerusalem, he communi-

¹ *Churches in Christ,*] i. e. "believing in Christ. Rom. xvi. 7." Locke. "which had acknowledged Christ." Wakefield. Or, as we should say, the Christian churches.

cated privately and fully to the apostles of greatest eminence the doctrine which he taught, ver. 1, 2. Ch. II.

Then, after fourteen years², I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took with me Titus also³. And I went up by revelation⁴, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach to the Gentiles; but separately⁵ to those who were of reputation⁶, lest I might run, or might have run, in vain⁷. Ver. 1.
2.

To confound the ignorance and malignity of those who presume to give out that I am no apostle, and that neither my mission nor my doctrine was approved by the true apostles of Christ, I will now mention some important circumstances which occurred in a visit to the church at Jerusalem fourteen years after my conversion to the Christian religion, being the first which I made to the apostles, after having by divine appointment fulfilled a mission to the Lesser Asia, for the purpose of preaching the gospel to the Gen-

² *Fourteen years.*] That is, according to the generality of commentators, after his conversion; and the visit to which the apostle here refers is that which is mentioned Acts xv., when Paul and Barnabas were deputed by the church at Antioch to go up to Jerusalem to consult the apostles there, concerning the obligation of the Gentile converts to submit to circumcision. Grotius and others for *fourteen* read *four*, by conjecture, supposing the apostle to allude to his second journey to Jerusalem, Acts xi. 30; when, together with Barnabas, he carried up a collection from the Christians at Antioch for the relief of the indigent believers at Jerusalem under the pressure of the famine predicted by Agabus. But this is expressly said to have been remitted to the elders of the church, so that it is possible that Paul might not then even have seen any of the apostles. It is not, however, likely that all the apostles would be absent from Jerusalem at the same time, Acts xii. The fact seems to be, that the question concerning circumcision does not appear to have been started, or at least to have attracted much notice, at the time of the second visit; which was antecedent to the mission of Paul and Barnabas into the Lesser Asia, and to the conversion of such large numbers of heathen idolaters to the Christian faith. See Acts xiii. xiv. *After fourteen years: δια δεκατεσσαρων.* “*δια* is used for *μετα* Matt. xxvi. 61; Mark ii. 1.” Newcome.

³ *Took with me Titus.*] This, as Dr. Doddridge observes, is the first mention of Titus in the New Testament, Luke having, for whatever reason, wholly omitted the mention of him in his history, though he was an eminent Gentile convert, a proselyte, a friend and a frequent associate of Paul. The apostle gives him a very high character, 2 Cor. viii., and it is even conjectured that the brother whom he speaks of ver. 18, as associated with Titus in collecting the charitable donations of the Corinthian Christians, was Luke himself. See 2 Cor. xii. 18. It is uncertain when Titus was converted.

⁴ *By revelation.*] This circumstance is omitted by Luke. The apostle might perhaps demur to accept the commission from the church at Antioch to consult the apostles at Jerusalem, lest it should appear as the acknowledgement of an authority superior to his own, till his objection was overruled by a divine communication. That his missions were frequently undertaken by a special direction from heaven, is evident to all who read the apostolic history. See Acts xvi. 7, 10, 22.

⁵ *Separately.*] κατ' ἰδίαν, severally, individually. See Chandler.

⁶ *To those of reputation.*] τοῖς δοκασιν see ver. 6, 9. to those who were pillars of the church, to James, Peter, and John.

⁷ *Lest I might, &c.*] See Newcome: i. e. I communicated to the apostles the whole doctrine I had taught, lest they, being misled by the false reports of others, should oppose my doctrine and obstruct my usefulness. Dr. Mangey, in Bowyer's *Conjectures*, proposes to read ὡς for πως, not as though, &c. Mr. Wakefield adopts this reading, and Dr. Priestley approves it.

Ch. II.
Ver. 2.

tiles. And Barnabas my fellow-labourer accompanied me: I also thought fit to take with us Titus, an eminent convert from heathenism. This journey we undertook at the desire of the church at Antioch, in order to settle a question which had been moved concerning the obligation of the Mosaic ritual. And for this purpose I was permitted and even commanded to go to Jerusalem by an express revelation from Christ, by whose direction I act in all the steps which I take relative to the purposes of my apostolical mission. Now when I came to Jerusalem, knowing the prejudices which existed against me, I fully communicated to the apostles of greatest note whom I found there, the whole of the doctrine which I preached to the Gentiles, without omitting the circumstance of their entire exemption from the yoke of the ceremonial law. This communication, however, was made to them individually and in private, to avoid the noise and clamour of prejudiced persons, and to secure the countenance and support of these apostles, without which I was apprehensive that my past and future labours might be rendered in a great measure fruitless.

2. The apostle shows in the case of Titus, that the apostles at Jerusalem did not insist upon the subjection of Gentile believers to the yoke of the law, ver. 3.

3. *But not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.*

Much as I wished to conciliate the affections of the apostles and Jewish Christians, I would not upon any account sacrifice the liberties of the Gentile church to this object. Nor was it indeed expected, or at least insisted upon; for, whatever might be their secret wishes, they by no means absolutely required that Titus should submit to the institutions of Moses, though they knew that he was a Gentile born, and not only a proselyte to, but a teacher of, the Christian religion.

3. The apostle further declares his determined opposition to the demands of Judaizing bigots, ver. 4, 5.

4. *And with regard to the false brethren' who were clandestinely introduced,*

¹ *With regard to, &c.]* δια δε της ψευδαδελφους. “δια regit accusativum, et valet quod attinet ad, Rom. iii. 27, viii. 10.” Schleusner. This appears to me to be the easiest construction and explanation of the words; but I am inclined to think that in fact the apostle in the hurry of writing having introduced a parenthesis, forgot, and altered the construction of this sentence, as he certainly did of the next.

who privily slipped in², as spies upon that liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might enslave us, to these we yielded subjection no not for an instant³, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Ch. II.
Ver. 5.

I have constantly withstood every attempt to impose the Jewish ceremonial upon the Gentile believers. Some half-Christians, bigots to the law, had come down to Antioch with great professions of regard for the new converts, but in fact with no other view but to see whether we complied with the Mosaic ritual, to deprive the Gentiles of their liberty, and to insist upon their subjection to the law of Moses. And some of this description, and with the same design, had artfully introduced themselves among the messengers who were deputed from Antioch to apply to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for the decision of this question. But I have uniformly and invariably opposed them, and have never upon any occasion, even for a moment, acquiesced in their impositions. For I was determined that the gospel should be offered to the Gentiles in its truth and purity, as I had received it from Christ, unincumbered with the burdensome ceremonies of the Jewish law.

4. His knowledge of the Christian doctrine was so complete, that the most eminent of the apostles at Jerusalem could make no addition to it, ver. 6.

Moreover those who were⁴ of consideration⁵, whatever they formerly were⁶ it maketh no difference to me, God accepteth no man's person: even

6.

² *Who privily slipped in.*] οἱ τινες παρεισήλθον. These words are omitted by Mr. Wakefield, upon the authority of the Syriac, Æthiopic, and Coptic versions. They appear like a marginal explanation of παρεισακτες. They *privily slipped in*: at Antioch, Acts xv. 1, they introduced themselves, probably pretending a mission from James (see Gal. ii. 12), and the other apostles at Jerusalem, to inquire after the welfare of the Gentile church and to promote their edification, when their real purpose was, to enforce subjection to the ceremonial law. And it is not unlikely that some of these zealots had contrived to get themselves nominated among the messengers who were sent to consult the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Acts xv. 2.

³ *Not for an instant.*] προς ὥραν, for an hour. "with whom we complied not even for a moment." Wakefield.—"ne ad breve tempus quidem, h. e. nunquam." Schleusner; who, however, gives the sense of "*momentum, punctum temporis, minima quævis temporis particula*;" and refers to Matt. viii. 13, ix. 22; Luc. xii. 39, 46.

⁴ *Those who were.*] In the original, *from those*, ἀπο δε των. The apostle evidently intended to say, *from those*, &c. *I received* no information: but having inserted a parenthesis, he changes the structure of his sentence, and concludes with, "*they added* no information to me."

⁵ *Who were of consideration.*] των δοκουντων ειναι τι. Literally, *who appeared to be somewhat*: i. e. by a well known elegance of the Attic dialect in the use of the word δοκεω, *who actually were somewhat*, who were persons of note and eminence in the church; pillars, as he afterwards expresses himself, ver. 9. "The Greek is equivalent to των οντων τι." Newcome.—"*Δοκεω, solet interdum eleganter pleonasticè poni.*" Schleusner. See Marc. x. 42; Luc. xxii. 24.

⁶ *They formerly were.*] ὅποιοι ποτε ησαν. "however some would set them up above me, as having conversed with Christ on earth, and been apostles long before me." Doddridge.

Ch. II.
Ver. 6.

*those who were of the greatest consideration communicated to me no instruction*¹.

Are there any among you who presume to charge me with not being so well informed concerning the doctrine of the gospel as the apostles at Jerusalem? Nothing can be more remote from truth than this accusation. There was a time, indeed, when they were greatly my superiors in Christian knowledge, but that makes no difference at present; they are not my superiors now. For God, with whom there is no partiality, and who disposes of his favours as he pleases, has vouchsafed to place me upon a level with the most eminent of them all; so that when I came to converse even with men of the greatest estimation in the church, so complete had my instructions been, that it was not in their power to communicate any new information to me, nor did they discover any error which required to be corrected.

5. So far were the other apostles from affecting any superiority over him, that after having conversed with him, they readily acknowledged him as their colleague, upon a footing of perfect equality with themselves, ver. 7—10.

7. *But on the contrary, when they saw that I was intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, as Peter was with that of the circumcision;*
 8. *for he who exerted his energy*² *in Peter for the apostleship of the circumcision, exerted also his energy in me for that to the Gentiles; and perceiving*
 9. *the favour*³ *which had been conferred upon me, James*⁴ *and Cephas, and John, who were pillars, gave unto me and Barnabas the right hand of fel-*

¹ *Communicated to me no instruction.*] εδεν προσανεθεντο. “Πρ. facta collatione addo aliquid, examine habito corrigo, meliora doceo.” Schleusner; who renders the words, “*me inquam apostoli, quorum maxima erat auctoritas, nihil novi docuerunt, aut correxerunt.*”—“in conference added nothing to me.” Newcome.—“they, I say, who had this character gave me no instructions.” Wakefield.

² *He who exerted his energy.*] ενεργησας. “who wrought powerfully in Peter,” &c. Newcome.—“who gave Peter the authority of an apostle to the Jews, gave me also a commission to the Gentiles.” Wakefield. The apostle means to say that his commission to the Gentiles was established by miracles as clearly as that of Peter to preach the gospel to the Jews; and that the other apostles were perfectly satisfied with this evidence. See Locke.

³ *The favour, &c.*] την χάριν. “This word,” says Dr. Taylor, “is put for the apostolic office, Rom. i. 5, xii. 3, xv. 18; 1 Cor. iii. 10: and in general may signify any office, &c. which is the effect of favour.”

⁴ *James, &c.*] Of the three apostles who are here mentioned as the pillars, that is, the supports and ornaments of the church at Jerusalem, James is mentioned first. He was probably the bishop or president of the church at Jerusalem: an honour assigned to him, perhaps, from his near relationship to our Lord, Gal. i. 19. It is observable that he was the person who spoke last, and summed up the arguments, in the council which was held upon the question of circumcision, Acts xv. 13—21.

lowship, that we indeed⁵ might go as apostles⁶ to the Gentiles, but they to the circumcision. Ch. II.
Ver. 9.

The persons of eminence to whom I particularly allude, were James and Peter and John, who then resided at Jerusalem; and who, being looked up to as the heads and pillars of the church, its best ornaments and supports, took particular cognizance of the cause referred to them by the Christians at Antioch. These apostles, therefore, having conversed with me concerning the nature and objects of my mission, and my qualifications for it, soon discovered and ingenuously acknowledged my equality with them. For they found that as Peter and others were commissioned to preach the gospel to the Jews, to work miracles in confirmation of it, and to impart spiritual gifts to believers, God had also given to me a similar commission, confirmed by similar powers, to teach the gospel to the heathen. Most readily, therefore, they acknowledged my apostolical authority; they received me as an associate and an equal, and agreed that each of us should labour in the province respectively assigned to us: so that, while they continued for the present to exercise their mission among the Jews, Barnabas and I should go on with plenary apostolical authority to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; in the conversion of whom they greatly rejoiced, and to our arduous labours for whose benefit they cordially wished success.

Only they desired that we should remember the poor, which very thing I also was earnest to do⁷. 10.

So far were these distinguished men from desiring to innovate upon our doctrine, or to impose a burdensome ritual upon the Gentile converts, that they assumed no authority whatever; but only requested that we would not forget the indigent believers in Jerusalem, who stood in great need of relief: an object which I was myself particularly anxious to promote, not merely from sympathy in their distresses, and a sincere desire to supply their wants, but from the hope that the liberality of the Gentile converts might gradually soften the prejudices of the Hebrew Christians, and reconcile them to the liberal spirit of the new dispensation.

⁵ *We indeed.*] ἡμεῖς μὲν. or, "that we on our part." This is the reading of the Alexandrine, Ephrem, and other ancient copies. See Griesbach.—αὐτοὶ δὲ, "but they on their part."

⁶ *Might go as apostles.*] The ellipsis is the same as in ver. 8, and ought to be supplied in the same manner.

⁷ *Earnest to do.*] Not only from sympathy and compassion to the indigent Christians at Jerusalem, who are probably the persons intended, but from the hope that the generosity of the Gentile Christians might gradually soften the prejudices of the Jewish bigots. "All that they proposed was, that we should remember to make collections among the Gentiles for the poor Christians of Judea, which was a thing that of myself I was forward to do." Locke.

Ch. II.

At the close of this interesting Section, it may be of use to compare the accounts which are given by Luke and Paul of this celebrated interview with the apostles at Jerusalem, when the liberties of the Gentile church were fully and authoritatively established: in which we cannot fail to remark the difference between the narrative of the calm impartial historian, and that of the party personally and deeply concerned. Luke, Acts xv., relates that certain Jewish zealots visited the Gentile church at Antioch, and troubled its peace by insisting upon the indispensable necessity of circumcision; that Paul and Barnabas warmly opposed this unauthorized encroachment upon the liberty of the Gentile church; that the dissensions rose to such a height that it was thought advisable to depute Paul and Barnabas, in company with other members of the church, to go up to Jerusalem to consult the apostles upon the case; that the apostles and elders, being assembled to deliberate upon the subject, after hearing the account which Paul and Barnabas gave of their great success in converting the Gentiles, came to an unanimous resolution, at the suggestion of James, that the Gentiles who believed were not subject to circumcision, nor to the yoke of the ceremonial law; but that they should be advised, out of regard to the prejudices of the Jews, to abstain from certain kinds of food which were forbidden by the law of Moses. And with this answer they returned to Antioch, and restored peace to the divided church. This is Luke's account.

The apostle Paul, as one personally concerned and deeply interested in the business, gives a narrative of the same journey with much greater animation than the historian; and details many circumstances which Luke omits. In the first place, he expresses great indignation at the intrusion of these unwelcome visitors from Jerusalem, who had artfully insinuated themselves into the society, in order to abridge the liberties of the Gentile converts, and to sow discord in the church. He further remarks, that he did not consent to undertake this journey at the request, much less at the bidding, of the church at Antioch. No: he would not compromise the authority which he derived from Christ: nor would he go, till he was directed by Christ himself, to accept of the mission from the brethren at Antioch. Neither would he for a moment give place to the intruders: and to exemplify the right which he claimed, he took Titus, a converted Gentile, with him to Jerusalem, whom he protected by his own authority from the imposition of the ceremonial law.

The apostle further relates, that in his intercourse with his elder brethren, the apostles of the greatest note in the church at Jerusalem, he did not pro-

fess to ask their advice, to apply for instruction, or to solicit approbation: he simply communicated the doctrine he had taught, the rules which he had observed, the injunctions he had imposed, the authority under which he had acted, the power which he had exercised, and the success which had followed his preaching. If they approved his proceedings, it was well: if not, he should still go on as he had been directed by him from whom he had received his commission. He communicated this information in private, that the multitude might not take offence. And as he expected, so it happened. In the first place, the apostles could make no addition to his instructions; and in the second place, they were delighted with his narrative, rejoiced in his success, and cordially received and acknowledged him as their equal and associate, commending him and his labours to the blessing of God.

These circumstances, so vividly described, give interest and credibility to the narrative; and contribute powerfully to his main design, of convincing the Galatians that he was truly an apostle of Jesus Christ, entirely independent of the other apostles, and equal in all respects to those who had been honoured with the apostleship many years before him.

SECTION IV.

THE APOSTLE, as a further proof of his independent authority, and of the consistency of his character, mentions the rebuke which he administered publicly to Peter at Antioch for the timidity and duplicity of his conduct; and comments upon the speech which he then delivered. Ch. ii. 11—21.

1. He states the misconduct of the apostle Peter, ver. 11—13.

Moreover, when Peter came to Antioch¹, I opposed him to the face because he was to be blamed². For before certain persons came from James³ he

Ver. 11.

12.

¹ *Peter came to Antioch.*] This was probably soon after the council at Jerusalem; and the first time that Peter had ever visited a Gentile church. Dr. Lardner observes, that this is the last time that Peter is mentioned in the New Testament, except in his own epistles, and 1 Cor. i. 12, iii. 22. Luke takes no notice of this journey.

² *To be blamed.*] κατεγνωσμενος, the participle for the adjective. The apostle uses a strong expression. Peter's behaviour deserved "not only a gentle reproof, but to be entirely condemned, as being contrary to his own knowledge, and tending to subvert the simplicity of the gospel." Chandler.

³ *From James.*] As it is mentioned that they came from James, it is probable that these officious zealots either had, or pretended that they had, authority from that apostle for the advice they gave. And though, after what had passed at the council, neither James nor the rest of

Ch. II. *used to eat*¹ *with the Gentiles; but when they came he withdrew*², *and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision*³. *And the rest of the Jews also acted hypocritically*⁴ *with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with them*⁵ *in this their hypocrisy.*

Having represented the independence of my character and conduct with respect to the apostles in circumstances in which we perfectly harmonized with each other, I will now show how little I was disposed to make improper concessions where our conduct differed. Soon after the important question concerning the obligation of the Mosaic law had been decided in favour of the Gentile believers by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, Peter made a visit to the church at Antioch; and here I was under the painful necessity of administering to him publicly, and in the presence of the whole assembled church, a severe rebuke, and of remonstrating with him against the duplicity of his behaviour; for indeed his conduct was most inexcusable, and deserving of condemnation. It was this: When Peter first came to Antioch he associated familiarly with the Gentile converts, and made no scruple of eating with them; knowing that under the gospel dispensation ritual distinctions are set aside. But afterwards, when some troublesome zealots came down from Jerusalem, and pretended that James, and the most respectable members of the Hebrew church, though they did not insist upon imposing the Mosaic ritual upon Gentile Christians, nevertheless held it to be inexpedient to associate familiarly with those who declined subjection to the law, Peter, instead of boldly adhering to his principles, and rebuking the false maxims and unauthorized intrusion of these officious bigots, meanly submitted to them, and acquiesced in their illiberal suggestions. So that, lest he

the Jewish Christians could insist upon the subjection of the believing Gentiles to the yoke of the law, they might still think it inexpedient to associate familiarly with them.

¹ *He used to eat.*] So Wakefield. This cannot, as Dr. Priestley observes, be understood of his eating any thing forbidden by the laws of Moses, but probably of familiarly associating with them at their meals. See Acts x. 28. Dr. Chandler, however, thinks that the apostle, having been taught by vision that nothing was unclean, esteemed it no sin to eat of their meats without distinction.

² *He withdrew.*] “ὕπεσσελλε, *se subduxit, subtraxit furtim id agens.*” Newcome; who justly adds, “his reason was an undue fear of the converted Jews: from which unworthy motive he acted contrary to the revelation made to him, and to his declared sentiments; and thus obstructed the progress of Christianity among the Gentiles.” See Acts x. 15, 28, 34, 35.

³ *Of the circumcision.*] τῆς ἐκ περιτομῆς. Jewish Christians, zealots for the law, who came from Jerusalem, who would be offended at his familiar intercourse with the Gentile believers, and would report it to his disadvantage.

⁴ *Acted hypocritically.*] “contrary to their better judgement and conviction; concealing their real sentiments through fear.” Newcome.

⁵ *Was carried away.*] “ἀπαγω signifies to carry or drive a person away against his will; here it signifies to be carried away by the force of authority and example, in opposition to conviction and judgement.” Chandler.

should give offence to these narrow-minded Jews, he suddenly broke off his connexion with the Gentile converts; to the great surprise and discouragement of that numerous and respectable body of believers. The other Jewish Christians naturally followed Peter's example; and, like him, in order to silence the clamours of unreasonable men, they acted contrary to the conviction of their better judgement. But what is most astonishing, even Barnabas himself, my friend and associate in the mission to the Gentiles, was carried away with the stream, and had not firmness sufficient to avow his principles, and to maintain his ground against the general defection.

Ch. II.
Ver. 13.

2. The apostle states the reproof which, under these circumstances, he administered to Peter, ver. 14—17.

But when I saw that they were not walking in the straight path of the true gospel⁶, I said to Peter⁷ before them all;

14.

When I saw them all deviating from the right line of duty, departing from the genuine principles and spirit of the gospel, impeding its progress, wronging their own consciences, and grieving and discouraging the Gentile converts, so far from submitting to the authority of Peter, or being restrained by an ill-timed complaisance to the age, character, and station of this distinguished apostle, I made no hesitation to address him in public, in the presence of the whole assembled church, in the language which I shall now repeat.

When thou who art a Jew livest according to the manner of the Gentiles, and not according to that of the Jews, how is it⁸ that thou compellest the Gentiles⁹ to observe Jewish rites¹⁰?

—14.

It is but lately, my venerable brother, that you associated without scruple

⁶ *In the straight path.*] ὀρθοποδοσι. “directly according to the truth of the gospel.” Chandler; who observes, that “the truth of the gospel was the gospel unmixed with the Jewish law.” “keeping the straight path of the truth of the gospel.” Wakefield.

⁷ *I said to Peter.*] Dr. Doddridge observes, that “had this been matter only of private offence, Paul would have known that duty required him to expostulate with Peter privately upon it; but as it was a public affair, this method was the most proper. Probably this happened after public worship; and it would seem the less surprising, considering the conferences which were held in the Jewish synagogues before the assembly was broke up. It is a very just observation of Mr. Jeffery here, that had any imposture been carried on, the contention of these two great managers would probably have been an occasion of discovering it.”

⁸ *How is it.*] The best copies read πως, instead of τι. See Griesbach.

⁹ *Compellest the Gentiles.*] αναγκάζεις. “Though this word,” says Dr. Chandler, “frequently signifies to compel by force and violence, yet it is as frequently used to denote moral compulsion.” Matt. xiv. 22; Acts xxviii. 19.

¹⁰ *To adopt Jewish rites.*] ιεδαϊζειν, to judaize. “to live like the Jews.” Wakefield. “Why, by an inconsistent conduct, and by the influence of a great example, do you induce the Gentiles to think that Jewish rites and customs are of indispensable obligation; those very rites with which you have occasionally dispensed?” Newcome.

Ch. II.
Ver. 14.

with the Gentile converts; and, though a Jew yourself, yet having been instructed from above to esteem nothing unclean which God had purified, you hesitated not to live as the Gentiles do, notwithstanding the rigour of the ceremonial precept. What, then, can be the meaning of this sudden change? What can induce you, as far at least as your example goes, to compel the Gentile believers to submit to a yoke from which you know they are exempt; and to lead them to conclude, that unless they subject themselves to the ceremonial law, they are not worthy to be acknowledged by you as Christian brethren?

15, 16. *We who are Jews by birth¹, and not sinners of the Gentiles², yet convinced³ that no man is justified⁴ by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ; even we have believed⁵ in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no man can be justified⁶.*

You and I are descendants of Abraham, born under the Mosaic covenant, subject to its authority, and by birth-right entitled to its blessings; not like

¹ *Jews by birth.*] *φύσει*, by nature. "What the Jews thought of themselves in contradistinction to the Gentiles, see Rom. ii. 17—23." Locke.

² *Sinners of the Gentiles.*] The apostle, by this expression, does not appear to have any reference to the moral but to the ceremonial state of the Gentiles: what they were by birth, not by practice. We who are Jews by nature, *i. e.* by birth, God's peculiar people, and not Gentiles, who are by birth sinners, out of covenant, unholy, ceremonially unclean. In this sense the word occurs very frequently in the New Testament, as must be evident to all who read with attention and impartiality. See ver. 17: *while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found sinners*; surely, not profligate and abandoned, but in an unholy state, ceremonially impure, and out of covenant with God, like the Gentiles themselves. "*Sinners*: such terms are applied to the whole body of the Gentiles, as *ἄγιος* is to that of Christians." Newcome. The word 'sinners' occurs in a national and not a moral sense in many passages in the New Testament. See Luke vii. 39, xix. 7; Matt. ix. 10, xi. 19, xxvi. 45; Luke vi. 32. The Gentiles, as Archbishop Newcome observes, "were idolatrous and immoral from their very religion; and therefore the terms sinners and Gentiles are often used as synonymous."

³ *Convinced.*] *εἰδοτες*, knowing. "convinced that no man can be acquitted." Wakefield. "since we know that a man is not justified." Newcome; who in his note adds, "cannot be accepted of God, so as to enter into the new covenant with him on a plea of obedience to the law of Moses."

⁴ *No man is justified.*] *δικαισται*. The word 'justified' is used in contradistinction to 'sinners' in the preceding clause, and is to be understood accordingly. To be *sinners* is to be out of covenant with God; to be *justified* is to be in covenant with him, to be in the number of his peculiar people. No man can be justified by law, because the law makes no provision for repentance; but believers are justified by faith in Christ, *i. e.* they become members of the Christian community, holy and consecrated to God by faith in Christ, as they formerly became members of the Jewish community by submission to circumcision. See Taylor's Key to the apostolical Epistles, chap. xii. xvi. xvii.

⁵ *Even we have believed,*] and by our faith have acknowledged the incompetency, and therefore the inutility, of the law. "*Even we, &c.*, and much more should the Gentiles, whose religious advantages are so far inferior to what we enjoy." Newcome.

⁶ *No man can be justified.*] "St. Paul gives the reason, Rom. iii. 20; because the law multiplied offences. See also Rom. iv. 15, v. 20, vii. 7, viii. 3; Gal. iii. 10." Newcome.

Ch. II.
Ver. 16.

these poor heathen who know nothing of the promises, and have no share in them. And yet so sensible are we that we have forfeited all claim by law to an interest in the promises, that we have professed faith in Jesus as the Messiah, in order to secure a title to covenant blessings, independently upon our observance of the ceremonial law. For, to say the truth, the law is so strict in its injunctions, and so merciless in its penalties, that no individual can ever say that he has fully come up to its requisitions, and is upon that ground strictly entitled to its rewards. Shall we, then, send these poor heathen converts to seek for justification, for pardon, and for life, upon the very ground which we have ourselves abandoned?

Now, if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are still found to be sinners⁷, then Christ is the minister of a dispensation of sin⁸: which can by no means be allowed⁹.

17.

Consider, my brother, the tendency of your conduct, and the dishonour which it entails upon our great Master and his gospel. We who are Jews believe in Christ for justification; a plain proof that we regard the law as incompetent to this end. But your example leads the Gentile believer to conclude, that faith will not justify him independently of submission to the law. Thus, according to the obvious tenor of your conduct, the dispensation of Christ is also imperfect; and Christ is the minister and medium of a dispensation which, while it professes to justify, leaves men in the same unpardoned and unholy state in which it found them. So that, in fact, our Master is a

⁷ Sinners.] See note, ver. 15.

⁸ Then Christ.] *απα Χριστος*. Literally, "then Christ is the minister of sin." See Taylor on Rom. v. 20, p. 296. The particle *απα* is so frequently used by the apostle to introduce an inference, (see ver. 21, where the very same expression occurs without any suspicion of an interrogation,) that it seems surprising that so many learned expositors should understand it in this case as interrogatory; especially as the sense is so much more clear and easy if the words are taken in their proper illative signification. If, believing in Christ, we are still sinners, then Christ is a minister of sin. Which God forbid. By a minister of sin the apostle means not, as it is commonly understood, a dispensation which allows and encourages sin, but a dispensation which while it professes to justify leaves men in an unholy unjustified state. So that, upon this supposition, believers in Christ would be no more the people of God than heathen themselves. And Christ, who taught them that by faith in him they would become the covenant people of God, equally with the Jews, would, upon this supposition, be a liar and impostor.

⁹ Which can by no means be allowed.] *μη γενοιτο*, let it not be: the form of expression which the apostle uses when he rejects a conclusion as utterly inadmissible and absurd: as a mathematician would say, Q. E. A., *Quod est absurdum*.

Here the address to Peter ends, as is evident from the change of persons in the next verse, where he proceeds to comment upon the rebuke he administered to Peter. There can be no doubt that this reproof, so ably and faithfully administered, produced its proper effect. This open rebuke was more honourable, and more truly friendly, than it would have been to have opposed and blamed him in private, while he abstained from public censure. That it left no unfavourable impression upon the mind of the apostle Peter, is evident from the kind and respectful manner in which he mentions Paul in his second epistle. 2 Pet. iii. 15.

Ch. II.
Ver. 17.

deceiver, an impostor, who makes pretensions which he cannot substantiate. But God forbid, my dear brother and associate in the gospel, that you or I should ever, by our language or example, give countenance to so false and dangerous a conclusion. Such, my friends, was the reproof which I administered to Peter ; and which, upon the ingenuous mind of that holy and generous apostle, produced an immediate and beneficial effect. But you will plainly see from this history that I neither needed instruction from him, nor yielded subjection to him.

3. The apostle argues that it was not likely that after this rebuke of Peter he should himself become an advocate for the law, ver. 18.

18. *Now, if I build up again what I have destroyed, I acknowledge myself a transgressor*¹.

I must be very weak indeed if I should now become, as some report of me, an advocate for Jewish rites, after having so publicly remonstrated against them ; for it would be making a confession that I never have made, and never will, that I acted wrong in the rebuke which I administered to Peter.

4. He avers that the law had itself taught him to renounce all dependance upon it, ver. 19.

19. *Moreover, I through the law am dead to the law*², *that I may live to God.*

The law itself teaches me its own inefficacy. It pronounces the sentence of death upon every act of disobedience. I have fallen under its condemnation, and can derive no hope from it. If I live at all, it must be by the mercy of God, and to his service must my restored life be devoted.

5. By faith in Christ he was become a new person ; nor would he degrade the gospel by having recourse to the law, ver. 20, 21.

20. *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live*³. *Yet no longer I, but*

¹ *Now if, &c.*] The sense I have given to this passage appears to me to be the most just, though it is not the most common.

² *I through the law.*] The law foretells its own dissolution, by the introduction of a superior dispensation, Rom. iii. 21 ; Gal. iii. 24, 25, iv. 21. Perhaps the sense will be more clear if the phrase is considered as a hypallage not unusual with the apostle. To avoid the offensive expression, 'the law is dead,' he says, I am dead to the law ; meaning that with respect to himself the law had ceased to exist, and he was now at liberty to enter into the service of a new master, *i. e.* the gospel ; in the profession of which he was devoted to the service of God. See a form of expression exactly parallel to this, Rom. vii. 4 ; with Dr. Taylor's note.

³ *I am crucified, &c.*] The apostle often represents conversion to the Christian religion under

*Christ liveth in me*⁴. *And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God*⁵, *who loved me and delivered up himself for me.* Ch. II.
Ver. 20.

Professing to believe in Christ, I am become dead to the law. My expectations from it and my subjection to it are as much at an end as those of a dead man with respect to the living world. But though crucified like Christ, like him I am raised to life! I am introduced into a new state of existence. I was formerly the poor, devoted, condemned slave of the law: I am now the pardoned, free, and happy believer in the gospel. So that I am not the same self, I am a new being, a member of Christ, a living portion of his mystical body. And the vital principle which animates the whole system, and pervades every individual member, that principle, which in my present new state of existence is the master spring of my whole character, and of every particular action, is faith; faith in that glorious event by which Christ was declared to be the Son of God; his resurrection from the dead. And this principle induces me to consecrate my renewed life, and all its faculties and powers, to him who loved us, and who died for all mankind, without excepting even me, who am the chief of sinners.

*I do not contemptuously reject*⁶ *the favour of God; for if justification come by the law, then Christ died in vain.* 21.

If I submitted to the Mosaic ritual as matter of obligation, and enforced it upon others, I should treat the mercy of God in the gospel with indignity and contempt: for, if the law could justify, the gospel were needless, and the death of Christ of no use. So that the whole Christian dispensation would be marked with consummate folly. But such a conclusion would be absurd and impious. Let us then seek for justification only by faith in Christ, wholly renouncing every expectation from the ceremonial law.

the emblem of death to a former state and dispensation, and of a resurrection to a new life and state of being, with new views, hopes, duties, and ends, so as to be quite different from his former self. See Rom. vi. 2—14, vii. 4.

⁴ *Yet no longer I.*] I am no longer the same self, οὐκ ἐτι ἐγώ, but I am one with Christ, a portion, a limb of his mystical person. It is a favourite figure of the apostle to represent the whole Christian church as one body, of which Christ is the head. It is an idea which occurs in almost every epistle, and plainly appears to have been always uppermost in his mind. See Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12—27, vi. 15; Eph. i. 23.

⁵ *By faith in the Son of God.*] i. e. in other words, faith in the resurrection of Jesus, by which he was declared to be the son of God, Rom. i. 4. Righteous men are called sons of God, as they are to be raised to an immortal life, Luke xx. 36. And Christ is called the first born, as having been first raised to immortality. Col. i. 18.

⁶ *Contemptuously reject.*] “ἀθετῶ signifies to reject or contemn; and this sense seems to be the best here, as it best suits the scope of the apostle’s argument.” Chandler.

PART THE SECOND.

Ch. III. THE APOSTLE OFFERS MANY CONSIDERATIONS TO RECLAIM THE AFFECTIONS OF THE GALATIAN CHURCHES FROM THEIR FALSE TEACHER, AND FROM HIS PHARISAIC DOCTRINE, AND TO RECOVER THEM TO THE SAME PRINCIPLES AND SPIRIT IN WHICH HE HAD LEFT THEM. Gal. iii. 1—v. 12.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE urges a variety of arguments¹ to prove that the Mosaic ritual was in no degree obligatory upon, or beneficial to, the Gentile Christians.
Ch. iii. 1—iv. 7.

1. The apostle apostrophizes the Christians of Galatia upon their infatuation in forsaking the doctrine of Christ, which had been so fully explained to them, ch. iii. ver. 1.

Ver. 1. *O thoughtless Galatians! who has fascinated you², before whose eyes Jesus Christ crucified has been so clearly represented³?*

¹ *Urges arguments.*] It may perhaps be asked why the apostle condescends to argue upon a point of pure revelation, when it would have been quite sufficient, and perhaps most satisfactory, to have appealed to inspiration only? But, admitting his inspiration, the tenor of his argument is perfectly just: for his first object is to establish his own apostolical authority by an appeal to his miraculous powers, ch. iii. 1—5, and then to reconcile his readers to the gospel mode of justification, by showing that it had a precedent in the case of Abraham, and that it was even the subject of a promise to Abraham's spiritual posterity: so that the gospel mode of justification by faith, without regard to the ceremonial law, was not only consistent with the divine authority of the Mosaic dispensation, but was actually foretold, introduced and supported by it. It may indeed be allowed, that where reasoning is introduced, the claim to inspiration is in that instance waved, and the apostle's doctrine may be true and his conclusion just, though his reasoning may be sometimes illogical, and his premises doubtful.

² *Who has fascinated, or enchanted you?*] It seems strange that the converted Gentiles should be so easily seduced, and so strongly attached to the burdensome ritual of the ceremonial law. But they might perhaps hope to escape persecution by passing for Jews, ch. v. 10, 11. Also, having been accustomed before their conversion to the pomp and ceremony of idolatrous rites, their minds might not be sufficiently purified and elevated, to relish the simplicity of the Christian religion. And finally, some even of the first converts to the Christian religion might entertain the notion, too generally prevalent, that a deficiency in moral virtue might be compensated by a rigid adherence to ceremonial institutions. N.B. The words "that ye should

Thus have I ever maintained, and ever will, the inutility and absolute nullity of the Mosaic ritual with respect to the believing Gentiles. This was the doctrine which I inculcated upon you, and to which I have ever most firmly adhered. And, O thoughtless Galatians! what powerful magician can have so blinded your eyes and stupified your understandings as to have induced you to depart so widely from the plain simple doctrine of a crucified Master which I so clearly defined to you, and to fancy that faith in a once dead but now risen and exalted Messiah is not of itself sufficient to entitle you to an interest in the blessings of the gospel, without subjecting yourselves to the grievous and intolerable yoke of the law?

Ch. III.
Ver. 1.

2. He reminds them that the gospel was first preached to them by himself, who had therefore a prior claim to their regard, ver. 2.

This only I desire to learn from you, Did ye receive the spirit⁴ from him who insisted upon the works of the law, or from him who taught the doctrine of faith⁵?

2.

Tell me truly which of the two is most entitled to your regard, your new teachers or myself? Which of us first instructed you in the spiritual, refined, and liberal doctrine of Christianity? Was it the man who insists upon the expediency of Jewish ceremonies, or was it he who told you that faith alone was sufficient? And surely some little deference is due to him to whom you are indebted for all you know of the gospel of Christ.

3. He urges the folly and absurdity of supposing that the superior dispensation could need the aid of a subordinate ritual, ver. 3.

not obey the truth," are omitted in the most approved manuscripts and versions, and in the editions of Griesbach and Newcome.

³ *Represented.*] The words *εν υμιν*, among you, obscure the sense, and are omitted in the Alexandrine and other manuscripts, and in Mr. Wakefield's version.

⁴ *Receive the spirit.*] The expression, owing to the apostle's haste, and the brevity which he affects in this epistle, is ambiguous and obscure. The word *spirit* probably in this verse, and unquestionably in the following, signifies the spiritual dispensation of the gospel, in opposition to the law; and I conceive the argument to stand as I have explained it in the commentary. This distinguishes it from the argument in the fifth verse, where an appeal is made to miraculous powers.

⁵ *From him who insisted, &c.*] By the phrases *εξ εγωων νομου*, *εξ ακοης πισεως*, the apostle undoubtedly means to designate himself, who taught justification by faith, and the false teachers, who insisted upon justification by law. It is to be remembered, that the apostle wrote this whole epistle with his own hand, and that writing Greek was difficult to him, Gal. vi. 11. This led him to study brevity and an elliptical mode of expression, which throws great obscurity over a considerable part of this epistle.

Ch. III.
Ver. 3.

Are ye so inconsiderate? having begun with the spirit¹, are ye now seeking to be made perfect by the flesh?

Can you possibly be so absurd as to believe that the gospel needs the aid of the law to make up for its defects? Can you suppose that, if you act up to the dictates and spirit of the gospel, you will not be accepted by God if you do not add to them the low, and comparatively puerile, rigours of the law?

4. The apostle pleads the inconsistency of deserting a doctrine which they had openly professed, and for which they had even suffered persecution, ver. 4.

4. *Have ye suffered² so many things in vain? if, indeed, it be in vain?*

Have not you been persecuted for your profession of the Christian religion, and by whom? By the Jews chiefly; the bigoted adherents to the institutes of Moses? Are you now gone over to the party of your persecutors; and virtually acknowledging, that your firmness and fortitude when suffering in the cause of truth and liberty was folly and enthusiasm? Let me hope that matters are not carried to this disgraceful and dangerous extreme, but that you may still be reclaimed from this strange delusion.

5. He appeals to the miracles wrought, and to the miraculous gifts imparted, as decisive in favour of the doctrine which he had taught, ver. 5.

5. *He who supplied you³ with the spirit⁴, and who performed miracles*

¹ *Spirit—flesh?*] i. e. the gospel and the law. This, as Mr. Locke observes, is a way of speaking very familiar to St. Paul. As this great commentator saw the true meaning of the word *spirit* in this verse, it is the more surprising that he should have understood it differently in the preceding, where he interprets it of spiritual gifts; which confounds the argument with that in ver. 5.

² *Have ye suffered, &c.*] Mr. Wakefield observes, that the word *πασχω* is what grammarians call a middle verb; and he renders the clause, “Have so many things been done for you in vain?” The apostle is generally understood to allude to their past firmness in bearing persecution, from which they now desire to shield themselves by assuming the character of Judaism. “If, indeed, the event shall prove that they have been suffered in vain; which I will not suppose, but rather trust that you will see your errors and amend them.” Newcome.

³ *He who supplied you.*] q. d. Was it my opponent or myself? This is a direct appeal to the existence and exercise of miraculous powers in circumstances in which an appeal to them would be infatuation and insanity, if they did not actually exist. Historic evidence can hardly be even conceived to rise to a higher degree than that which proves the existence of these supernatural qualifications; and consequently of the truth of the Christian religion, which they were intended to establish. It may seem surprising that the false teachers, who performed no miracles, should be more attended to than the apostle, who exercised and even communicated miraculous powers; but it is to be considered that these false teachers represented themselves as commissioned by the apostles at Jerusalem, whom they represented as Paul's superiors, from whom he had derived his authority and instructions. And they affirmed that the apostle had greatly exceeded

among you, was he the teacher⁵ of the works of the law? or of the doctrine of faith? Ch. III.
Ver. 5.

I will at once appeal to the most decisive evidence. You know that when the gospel was first preached to you, miracles of an extraordinary kind were wrought among you, and spiritual gifts were imparted to many of you upon your profession of the gospel. Tell me plainly, was it my opponent or myself who produced these high credentials? Did he or I work miracles among you? Did you receive your extraordinary powers from the man who tells you that you must submit to the ceremonial law; or from him who assures you that faith alone will entitle you to all the privileges of the gospel? Put the question closely to your understandings and to your consciences: How can you possibly resist such cogent evidence?

6. He argues from the case of Abraham, who was justified by faith, ver. 6, 7.

As Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness; therefore know ye, that those who are of the party of faith⁶ are the children of Abraham⁷. 6.
7.

his instructions, in teaching the inutility of the Mosaic ritual: for that the apostles at Jerusalem required the observance of it as absolutely necessary; and that Paul himself was so sensible of this, that he insisted upon the obligation of the law in other places, though he excused the Galatians. All this will be very evident to those who read the epistle with attention; and it easily accounts for the deference which was paid to the judaizing instructors.

⁴ *The spirit.*] The spirit is here universally understood as signifying miraculous gifts and powers; though the same word is used immediately before, ver. 2, 3, to express the gospel, in opposition to the law. This is one instance among many, of the apostle's sudden change of the signification of his words without any previous notice. This is remarkably the case in this epistle; which being written by his own hand, he affects brevity, and uses as few words as possible.

⁵ *Was he the teacher?*] The apostle's expression is so very elliptical, that it is necessary to insert some such words as these, to make it at all intelligible. Archbishop Newcome says, "I understand *ην* after each of the participles, and suppose that St. Paul speaks of himself with his usual delicacy. None but apostles could impart the spirit."

⁶ *Who are of the party of faith.*] *οἱ ἐκ πίστεως*, they who rely on faith for justification, in opposition to *οἱ ἐκ νόμου*, "they who are of the party of law:" they who seek for justification by the works of the law. These, that is, these only (see Wakefield), are children of Abraham; or, in other words, are justified after his pattern; namely, by faith. They believe in the *actual* resurrection of Jesus, and are justified thereby: he believed in the *possible* resurrection of Isaac, whom he was about to sacrifice, and his faith was imputed for righteousness, without regard to the ceremonial law. This argument, which the apostle barely glances at here, he insists upon at large Rom. iv.: a strong presumption that both the epistles were written by the same author; for a train of ideas and arguments so peculiar would hardly have entered the imagination of two different writers.

⁷ *Children of Abraham.*] "His imitators, and heirs of the promise made to him." Newcome. With Locke and others I join the seventh verse to the sixth, from which it appears to be an inference. See Worsley and Rosenmüller.

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Ver. 7.

It is no novel doctrine which I am labouring to inculcate. You are admitted into covenant upon the same terms that Abraham was: he believed the divine promise, and by his faith obtained the blessing. And be assured, that however others may boast of their natural descent from this pious patriarch, it is upon the heirs of his faith only that the promise is entailed. They who believe in the doctrine of the gospel, and who expect its blessings exclusively of all regard to legal rites, are the true descendants of Abraham, and heirs with him of the divine inheritance, upon the same terms on which he obtained the blessing.

7. The scriptures had foretold to Abraham that all nations should be accepted by God, upon the same terms with himself, ver. 8, 9.

8. *Now the scripture, having foreseen that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, prophetically announced¹ the glad tidings to Abraham: "In thee shall all the nations be blessed²." So then, they who are of the party of faith³ are blessed with Abraham, who believed.*

Believers under the gospel are not only justified, after the example of Abraham, without regard to ceremonial institutions, but it is expressly foretold that they should be so. For God, foreseeing and intending that under the gospel dispensation believers should be admitted into covenant without submitting to Jewish ceremonies, was pleased to announce this his kind design repeatedly to Abraham, in the promise recorded in the Jewish scriptures: the purport of which is, that at some future period all the nations of the earth should be admitted to share the privileges of the covenant, upon the

¹ *Prophetically announced, &c.]* προεγγεμισατο "proclaimed before glad tidings to Abraham." Newcome. "gave this joyful promise long ago." Wakefield. "he gave Abraham a foreknowledge of the gospel." Locke.

² *In thee, &c.]* This promise first occurs Gen. xii. 3, when Abraham was required to leave his native country and to reside in Canaan; and was repeated several times afterwards to Abraham, and to his son Isaac and to his grandson Jacob. It is generally understood as referring to the descent of the Messiah from him, whose doctrine would be a blessing to the whole world: nor do I see any reason to recede from this acceptance of the promise. It is so explained by the apostle Peter, Acts iii. 25, and by the apostle Paul in this place. Some expositors understand the promise as signifying nothing more than this, that the posterity of Abraham should become so prosperous, that their prosperity should become proverbial; so that others should bless themselves in them, or wish themselves as happy as the descendants of Abraham. See Dr. Priestley on the text. Observe here, that the scripture is personified, yet who supposes the scripture to be a real person? so the gifts of the spirit may also be personified, without implying that the holy spirit is a distinct intelligent agent.

³ *Who are of the party of faith.]* "Of faith and of the works of the law, spoken of two races of men; the one as the genuine posterity of Abraham, heirs of the promise, the other not." Locke.

same easy terms with himself. This happy period is now arrived; and all who believe the gospel are now admitted into the same state of privilege and favour which he enjoyed as the reward of his strong and operative faith. But if Jewish rites were also made necessary, the promise of God would in this instance have been violated.

Ch. III.
Ver. 9.

8. The law condemns all who seek for justification by it, ver. 10.

Moreover⁴, as many as are for the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed be every one who continueth not in the performance of all things which are written in the book of the law⁵.

10.

It is quite absurd for any one to expect advantage by adherence to the ceremonial law. For, allowing that much benefit might be derived from perfect obedience, this itself is morally impossible. And the law denounces a solemn curse upon all who disobey it in any particular; and makes no provision for the forgiveness of the penitent. Every one, therefore, who, rejecting the mercy of the gospel, hopes to obtain the blessing by adherence to the law, is, by that very circumstance, a convicted and condemned culprit, utterly destitute of help and hope.

9. The prophetic scriptures announce a mode of acceptance with God different from that which the law prescribes, ver. 11, 12.

But that by the law no one is justified before God, is evident; for the just by faith shall live⁶. Now the law is not of faith, but saith, He who performeth these things shall live by them⁷.

11.

12.

⁴ *Moreover.*] *γὰρ* here introduces a collateral argument, not an inference; in the second clause it assigns a reason for the preceding affirmation, and is properly translated *for*.

⁵ *Cursed, &c.*] See Deut. xxvii. 26. The apostle's mind was possessed with the idea that no one could be justified, or obtain the favour of God by claim of right, as having fulfilled the law; because no one had, in every particular, fulfilled its injunctions, and the law made no provision for penitents. He treats of this argument at large in the first three chapters of the epistle to the Romans.

⁶ *The just by faith shall live.*] This is a quotation from Hab. ii. 4, where it is translated by Archbishop Newcome, "the just shall live by his faith:" though he acknowledges that there is an ambiguity in the original, as well as in the passages where it is cited by the apostle. "The meaning of the prophet is," says the learned prelate, "The good, or the righteous man, who believes in my prophets, and obeys their directions, shall live at the time of the Babylonish invasion. See Jer. xxi. 9, xxxviii. 2, 17, 18. In the New Testament the words are accommodated."

Archbishop Secker observes, that "the English word *faith* is only used here, and Deut. xxxii. 20, in all the Old Testament. And the Hebrew word denotes many times an attribute of God, but never a quality in man, except 1 Sam. xxvi. 23, where it means *fidelity*; Prov. xxviii. 20, *a man of truth*; and Deut. xxxii. 20, *there is no truth in them*. But it never means *faith*, or credit given to testimony. It may be translated here, *by his faithfulness*." See Newcome on the Minor Prophets, Appendix, p. 240.

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Ver. 12.

The prophets concur with the Mosaic writings in predicting that the time would come when faith alone, exclusive of ritual performances, should be made the condition of participation in the blessings of the covenant. Such is the language of the prophet Habakkuk. Not he who is perfect in obedience, but he who is faithful and sincere, shall escape with life. But the unrelenting language of the law is, He, and he only, who performs all duties, without any exception, may claim a right to safety and impunity.

10. The apostle further declares, that the time referred to by the prophets must be the advent of Christ, who by his death has superseded the old dispensation, and introduced the new, ver. 13, 14.

13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a*
14. *curse for us*¹, *(for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree,) that the blessing of Abraham*² *might come unto the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, that we through faith might receive the spirit promised*³.

Upon the whole, it is very evident that the apostle only uses the text by way of accommodation; the words suiting his purpose, he cites them without any regard to their original connexion or primary signification. And this is one instance among many where the doctrine of the apostle is true and of divine authority, though the argument which he alleges in support of it seems to be infirm and irrelevant, and to amount to nothing more than a mere verbal coincidence. See Rom. i. 17; Heb. x. 38.

¹ *He who performeth, &c.]* See Lev. xviii. 5: *Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgements, which if a man do, he shall live in them. I am the Lord.*

² *Having been made a curse for us.]* The apostle immediately explains what he means by Christ being made a curse; namely, that he was crucified, because crucifixion was a kind of death which the law pronounces accursed; Deut. xxi. 23, *he that is hanged, is accursed of God.* It was a death which the law inflicted upon outlaws and the worst of criminals. The apostle having thus explained his meaning, it is evident that when it is said that Christ was made a curse, he could not mean to say that Christ bore the wrath and curse of God for the sins of the elect, as some have strangely taught. See Beza in *loc.*

He was made a curse for us: that is, for our benefit. He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. How? By ratifying with his blood that new covenant, by which faith is made the condition of justification, which supersedes the old covenant, the law of Moses and its condemning sentence. This is the doctrine which pervades all the apostle's writings, as every unprejudiced reader must perceive, who is well acquainted with them.

"In this sense," (says Dr. Chandler in his excellent note upon this passage,) "the innocent Jesus was made a curse by God, as his heavenly Father permitted him to die that ignominious death which the law of Moses pronounced accursed, and which was inflicted only on the vilest and most accursed malefactors. But how are we delivered from the curse of the law by Christ's being made a curse, or dying an accursed death? Why, plainly thus: As he hereby put an end to the obligation of the Jewish law, which pronounced a curse on every one who did not in all things continue to observe it, by introducing and establishing a better covenant into the world, even that covenant which God made with Abraham, of which this was the principal article, that faith should be imputed to him for righteousness."

³ *The blessing of Abraham]* "was evidently his justification and acceptance with God through faith: this God himself imputed to him for righteousness, and signally rewarded and blessed him on account of it. And therefore the coming of Abraham's blessing upon the Gentiles was their being justified and accepted of God upon the same principle of faith as he was." Chandler.

⁴ *The spirit promised.]* Gr. the promise of the spirit, or, the promised spirit. See Rosenmüller.

Christ has delivered us from the curse of the law, by delivering us from the obligation to obey it. And this he has done by being himself, if I may so express it, made a curse for us; or, in other words, by being put to death upon the cross, a death which the law pronounces accursed. And Christ delivers us by his death, because that event is the ratification of the new dispensation, which supersedes the dispensation of rites and ceremonies, and which abrogates the law and its condemning power. And thus he introduces that new covenant which was the object of the divine promise to Abraham, the gracious purport of which is to communicate to believing Gentiles all its invaluable promises and blessings, upon condition of faith alone, exclusive of all regard to the ceremonial law.

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Ver. 14.

11. The apostle argues that, upon principles of common equity, the law of Moses could not vacate the promise which had been made to Abraham and to his spiritual posterity long before, ver. 15—18.

Brethren, I reason upon common principles⁴. No one cancelleth or altereth⁵ a covenant which hath been ratified, though it be only between man and man⁶.

15.

I will now show you, upon principles of common equity, that it is impossible that the ceremonial law should be obligatory upon Gentile believers in Christ. You well know, that among men a covenant, when it is once solemnly ratified, cannot be abrogated or changed; and no new conditions can be added to it without the consent of both the contracting parties.

Now the promises were made to Abraham and his offspring⁷. The pro-

16.

ler; who rightly interprets the phrase, "*dona spiritus sancti, omnibus Christianis communia*." The word spirit is here used in the same sense as in ver. 2 and 3, for the gospel and its blessings, which are common to all who believe; and not for supernatural gifts and powers, which were necessarily limited to a small number.

⁴ *I reason, &c.*] Literally, "I speak according to man. I am speaking of a common custom." Wakefield.

⁵ *Altereth.*] *ἐπιδιατάσσεται*. See Newcome and Chandler. "*Insuper novas et contrarias conditiones addit.*" Schleusner.

⁶ *Only between man and man.*] "*ὁμῶς ἀνθρώπων*" though it be but a man's covenant." Newcome.

⁷ *To Abraham and his offspring.*] It is difficult to make out, and still more to vindicate, the apostle's reasoning. This, however, does not at all affect his doctrine, that the Gentiles should be admitted to the privileges of the gospel, without submitting to the yoke of the law; a doctrine which he was taught by revelation, and which he confirmed by miracle. He is also right in arguing from the case of Abraham, that as this patriarch was justified by faith, it was in strict analogy that believers under the gospel should be justified in the same way. But how far the apostle's argument holds good in detail may be doubted. The steps of his proof are the following: 1. God promises to Abraham and his offspring, that all nations shall be blessed in him, *i. e.* should be justified as he was, see ver. 8, 9. 2. This promise being made

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Ver. 16.

mise saith not, *And to thine offsprings, as concerning many; but To thine offspring, as concerning one; which person is Christ.*

It was promised to Abraham that he should be justified by faith; and to believers, his spiritual offspring (ver. 6), that they should be blessed in him, or like him; that is, should be justified by faith only (ver. 8, 9). And, if I may be permitted to use a verbal argument in the case, you may observe that the word offspring, in connexion with the promise, always occurs in the singular and not in the plural number; which may be understood as signifying that only one class of Abraham's posterity is entitled to the blessing. The promise, therefore, must be limited to his spiritual descendants, the heirs of Abraham's faith, the great body of believers consisting of Jews and Gentiles, of which Christ is the head; to the entire exclusion of the patriarch's natural descendants, as long as they rely for justification upon the ceremonial law.

17. *And I say this, that the covenant which had been previously ratified by God concerning Christ¹, the law, which was given four hundred and thirty*

to Abraham's offspring in the singular, and not in the plural number, it is thereby limited to one class only of the descendants of Abraham, ver. 16. 3. This class, to which the promise is limited, consists of believers in Christ, who are by faith sons of Abraham, ver. 6; and who, together, constitute Christ's mystical body, ver. 28. See Locke. 4. This promise, so made to Abraham's spiritual offspring, could not be vacated by the Mosaic law, which was not given till upwards of four hundred years afterwards, and to which the subjects of the promise were not parties, ver. 17. 5. Therefore God is by irrevocable promise bound to justify believing Gentiles; that is, to admit them to the privileges of the gospel, without subjecting them to the yoke of the law. The principal objections to this argument are: 1.) The limitation of the promise, which seems indefinitely to express the great benefits which mankind would ultimately enjoy from the posterity of Abraham, *i. e.* from the Messiah, see Acts iii. 25, to the circumstance of emancipation from the ceremonial law: and 2.) The extraordinary method by which he proves that Christ or believers are the offspring to which the promise is limited; it being notorious that the original word, in the singular number, is commonly used to express all the descendants of a common ancestor.

Archbishop Newcome suspects that this sentence is a marginal note inserted into the text. St. Jerom says that St. Paul made use of a false argument, which, though it might do well enough with the stupid Galatians, yet would not be approved by any wise or learned men. And Le Clerc says it is an allegorical kind of argument, which the apostle made use of for the conviction of the Jews, who were used to such methods of reasoning. Dr. Chandler thinks these suppositions injurious to Paul's character; and endeavours to explain and justify his reasoning, by observing, "that after God made the promise to Abraham, he limited the blessing to his posterity by Isaac; for though he promises to make Ishmael a great nation, *because he is thy seed*, yet he restricts the covenant to the descendants of Isaac: *in Isaac shall thy seed be called*, Gen. xxi. 12, 13. Therefore the promise, *in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed*, could refer to no other of the *seeds* or *sons* of Abraham but Isaac only. So that the apostle makes out that this promise relates to a single person, or son of Abraham, exclusive of all his other posterity."

N. B. Mr. Wakefield, with the Syriac, Coptic, and Æthiopic translators, reads σοις σπερμασι, thy offsprings.

¹ *Concerning Christ.*] These words are omitted in the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, and in the Æthiopic, Vulgate, and other versions. See Griesbach and Wakefield. *Concerning Christ*: "*pertinens ad Christum.*" Grotius. See Chandler.

years afterwards², could not cancel, so as to make void the promise. For Ch. III.
if the inheritance³ be by law, it is no more by promise; whereas God freely Ver. 18.
gave it to Abraham by promise.

No covenant, as I have just observed, can be cancelled without the consent of both the contracting parties; nor can a promise be revoked but with the permission of the promisee. I conclude, therefore, with confidence, that the first covenant which God had made with Abraham, and with his spiritual offspring, could not possibly be vacated by another covenant which he made with another party many centuries afterwards, so as to change the terms of the original agreement for conditions less favourable, and that without the consent of the parties concerned. Such conduct would be no less than flagrant injustice, and a palpable violation of a previous promise, which cannot, therefore, be imputed to God. It is in vain to plead that the promised blessing may be imparted upon both conditions; these conditions are absolutely incompatible with each other. If men are justified by law, they are not justified by faith; if the blessing is obtained by faith, it is not acquired by law. But it is evident, that to Abraham and to his believing posterity it was promised freely as the reward of faith, exclusive of the ceremonial law; and from this promise God cannot and will not recede.

12. Nevertheless the law was not without its use, though it did not supersede the previous promise, ver. 19, 20.

To what purpose, then, served the law? It was added because of trans- 19.
gressions⁴; being administered by messengers⁵ under the direction of a

² Four hundred and thirty years afterwards.] The first promise was made to Abraham when he was 75 years old, Gen. xii. 3, 4; from this date to the birth of Isaac was 25 years, Gen. xxi. 5; Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born, Gen. xxv. 26; Jacob went into Egypt at 130, Gen. xlvii. 9; and the Israelites sojourned there, according to the Septuagint, 215 years: which completes the number. See Whitby and Doddridge.

³ Inheritance,] i. e. says Dr. Chandler, the blessedness entailed on Abraham and his seed, of being justified by faith. It comes to them by descent and birthright.

⁴ Because of transgressions.] The expression is very elliptical, and must be explained by comparing it with other passages in the apostle's writings. The law declared the nature of sin; passed sentence of death upon every sin; it showed no mercy, and drove men to despair. In this way it guarded man against the commission of sin, and made a merciful dispensation more welcome. See Gal. iii. 23—25; Rom. vii. 7, &c., iii. 20, iv. 15, v. 20.

⁵ Administered by messengers.] διαταγεις, "through the ministry of angels." Wakefield. "διατασσω respondet Latino constituere, et ita latè patet, ut de quovis, sive propria sive aliena auctoritate aliquid præcipiente, jubente, mandante, accurante, usurpetur. 1 Cor. xi. 34." Schleusner. I have given to this passage the sense which appears to me most natural and intelligible. Of the existence and ministry of angels we know nothing; nor does it concern us to know any thing. But that the law was communicated to Israel by Moses, as the medium of divine communications; and that the observation of it was enforced from age to age by a suc-

Ch. III. *mediator, till that offspring should come to whom the promise belonged.*

Ver. 20. *But this mediator was not a mediator for one of the parties, and God is but one of the two*¹.

Now, if any one should be inclined to ask What is the use of the law, if it does not justify ; and if the observation of its ceremonial precepts is not necessary to acceptance with God ? I answer briefly, that the principal use of the law was, by its strict and holy precepts, and by the irrevocable sentence of condemnation which it passes upon every offence, to convince those who were under its jurisdiction of their guilt and danger, and to render a more merciful dispensation welcome. This ceremonial and moral law, which was first communicated to the Israelites by the instrumentality of Moses, was confirmed and administered from generation to generation, by a succession of priests and prophets ; till it was eventually superseded by the introduction of the new dispensation ; under which, agreeably to the divine promise, all who believe are to be justified by faith, that is, they are to be admitted to all the blessings of the gospel, without regard to the ceremonial law. And here, in confirmation of my preceding argument, I would remind you, that the covenant, of which Moses was the mediator, could not vacate the covenant made with Abraham. For the parties in the Mosaic covenant were God and the children of Israel ; whereas the parties in the former covenant were God and believers ; and for the latter of these contracting parties Moses had no authority to act, and consequently they are not bound by the contract of which he was, if I may so express it, the negotiator.

13. The law, in its place, was so far from being hostile to the divine promise, that it was even subservient to the introduction of the new and better dispensation, ver. 21—24.

21. *Is the law, then, contrary to the promises of God ? Far from it. If, indeed, a law had been given which could have conferred life, certainly justification*
 22. *would have been by that law*². *But the scripture hath included all under*

cession of prophets or divine messengers, till the coming of Christ, is a fact perfectly intelligible, and much to the apostle's purpose. That the word *αγγελος* will bear this sense, it would be superfluous to prove ; and there can be little doubt that it is used in the same sense through the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. See Mr. Wakefield's translation.

¹ *God is but one of the two.*] This is the reading of the Æthiopic, and adopted by Wakefield. This sense of the passage makes it very pertinent to the apostle's purpose, so that there is no occasion, with Michaelis and Newcome, to consider this verse as a marginal gloss. "The Æthiopic translator has *Dominus unus est duorum*, interpreting, as I suppose." Newcome. The apostle's brevity creates obscurity.

² *Justification would have been by that law.*] "The apostle argues, that if such a law had been

*in*³, so that the promise of justification by faith⁴ is extended⁵ to believers only. Ch. III. Ver. 22.

Some may be disposed to ask, Whether this state of the case is not in fact setting up two dispensations in opposition to each other; one of which justifies by faith, and the other by works? But I can assure such objectors, that there is no contrariety in the divine dispensations. They are all harmonious and consistent with each other. If, indeed, the Mosaic law had been such that its terms might have been easily fulfilled, and its blessings easily attained, this would have been a different mode of justification; and law and promise would have been at variance with each other. But, in fact, the conditions of the Mosaic covenant are so strict, and its condemning sentence is so severe and irreversible, that none ever were or could be justified by it; nor could any ever lay claim to life upon the ground of right and of perfect obedience. Accordingly, it is evident to every one who reads the Jewish scriptures, that all men, Jew and Gentile without exception, are in a state of condemnation. So that there is no hope for any but for those who take the benefit of the promise; and all who are justified obtain this favour by faith alone, without any claim from law.

*Moreover, before this faith came, we were kept in custody*⁶ *under the*

23.

given to the Jews as could have secured justification, then righteousness would have been by the law; and thus the promise of God would have been of no effect, which expressly declared that acceptance and pardon should be the consequence of true faith." Chandler.

³ *Included all under sin.*] "*τα παντα*, all things, i. e. all men." Locke. "The apostle," says Dr. Chandler, "uses the most general expression that can be, that the Jews might not think themselves excepted from the common charge."

⁴ *By faith.*] The received text adds the words of *Jesus Christ*, which are omitted in the *Æthiopic* and by Mr. Wakefield; and which are not necessary to the sense.

⁵ *Is extended.*] *iva δοθη*, is given. *iva* does not always introduce the final cause, but is sometimes used to express an inference only. So *iva πληρωθη* does not always signify that it *might be* fulfilled, but that by such an event such a prophecy *was actually* fulfilled. And here the apostle does not mean to say, that the scriptures represent men as sinners, in order to their being justified by faith; but that, in consequence of all being sinners, the claim of law is wholly excluded, and justification can only be obtained by faith, agreeably to the divine promise. "*Ut felicitas promissa intelligeretur dari per doctrinam Jesu Christi credentibus. iva δοθη*, logice: *ut intelligamus, perspiciamus.*" Rosenmuller. Dr. Macknight says, "that though *iva* commonly denotes the end for which the thing is done, it often signifies the effect or consequence of an action simply, without expressing the intention of the agent; and therefore, in such cases, it ought to be translated *so, so as*, Luke ix. 45; Rom. v. 20; 1 Cor. xiv. 13; Gal. v. 17; Rom. xi. 11." *Prel. Ess. No. 4.*—"The scriptures of the Old Testament represent all mankind, Jews and Gentiles, to be in a state of sin and guilt, and set forth the Messiah promised to Abraham as the only Saviour by whom their pardon and salvation is to be obtained." Pyle.

⁶ *Kept in custody under the law.*] "The word signifies to be kept in custody or durance. The Jews were in the condition of children not arrived to years of maturity, and kept in custody under the discipline of the law, that chastised them for every offence, and rigorously exacted punishment without hope of pardon." Chandler.

Ch. III.
Ver. 24.

law, confined together until faith¹ should be revealed. So that the law was our conductor² to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

And truly those of us who lived under the law were in a state of very severe pupillage, which might well render the liberal and merciful spirit of the gospel acceptable and welcome. We were like children confined together in a school, under the tuition of a very harsh and severe master, looking and longing for the coming of the time when we should be set at liberty, and be at our own disposal. The gospel dispensation is that free and happy state which was the object of our earnest desire and joyful anticipation. And the severe discipline which we endured under our former rigid tutor the law, has taught us the unspeakable value of the privileges of the gospel.

14. Believers are released from the restrictions of the law, as children when declared of age, from the authority of a guardian, ver. 25, 26.

25, 26. *But faith being come, we are no longer under a conductor: for ye are all the acknowledged sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus.*

While law retained its authority, we remained in a state of childhood and pupillage, subject to severe discipline and restraint; but the new dispensation having superseded the Mosaic law, these rigours have ceased: and law, having performed his office, resigns his charge. You, who believe in Christ, are declared of age; you are taken from school, you are delivered from the tyranny of law, and are owned and treated as children of God, living at liberty in your father's house.

15. Believers are free from the yoke of the law, inasmuch as in a body they form one mystical person; which is that very offspring of Abraham to whom the promise is made, ver. 27—29.

27. *Moreover, as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ³.*

¹ *Faith should be revealed.*] i. e. the dispensation of faith. "The thing promised in this chapter, sometimes called *blessing*, ver. 9, 14; sometimes *inheritance*, ver. 18; sometimes *justification*, ver. 11, 24; sometimes *righteousness*, ver. 21; and sometimes *life*, ver. 11, 21." Locke.

² *Conductor.*] In the original, *pædagogus*, a "conductor *qui puerum in ludum ducebat et reducerebat*. It was a name given likewise to the servant who taught the children letters and superintended their behaviour. They were generally persons of rigid manners." Newcome, Mac-knight.

³ *Have put on Christ.*] This is a very bold, not to say a very harsh figure; but it is a very familiar one to the mind of the apostle, and very necessary to be kept in view by all who are desirous thoroughly to understand his writings. All who by baptism have made a public profession of faith in the gospel have "put on Christ:" so that, as Mr. Locke justly explains the

Let me call your attention to another consideration. By being baptized into the name of Christ, you publicly avow yourselves to be the disciples of Christ. And as such you are, if I may so express it, clothed with Christ; so that you lose as it were your separate personality, and become one with him: you constitute a part of that great body of which he is the head.

Ch. III.
Ver. 27.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye all are one person⁴ in Christ Jesus. But if ye are one person in Christ Jesus⁵, then are ye the offspring of Abraham, and heirs in virtue of the promise.

28.

29.

Bold as the figure may be, I will pursue it still further. The gospel of Jesus is offered to all persons of all ranks and of all countries, and some of all descriptions have embraced it. But when they become believers, all these distinctions cease: Jew and Gentile, high and low, rich and poor, male and female, all are united in Christ, all become portions of his mystical body; all are so knit and blended together that they constitute only one person. That person is Christ mystical; and this symbolical person is the true offspring of Abraham, that one descendant to whom the promise was made, and by virtue of that promise they are entitled to the character of sons of God, and to

phrase, "to God now looking upon them there appears nothing but Christ; they are, as it were, covered all over with him, as a man is with the clothes he has put on; and hence he says in the next verse, they are all one in Christ Jesus, as if there were but that one person." The apostle here, and in many other passages of his writings, considers the great body of believers as constituting one mystical person, of which Christ is the head. It is a favourite comparison with him, to which he often alludes, and upon which he loves to dilate. See Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12—27; Eph. i. 23, v. 29—31. It may however be proper to observe, that this symbolical and highly figurative mode of expression gives no countenance to the modern and extravagant doctrine of the sinner being clothed with the imputed righteousness of Christ, in order to his justification: a notion than which nothing can be more foreign to the apostle's mind, or more inconsistent with reason and with Christianity; and which indeed never occurred to any one's imagination till many centuries after the mission and ministry of the apostles had been concluded.

⁴ *Ye all are one person.*] All believers make one person, and that person is the true and sole offspring of Abraham, to whom the promise was made, which the law, delivered long afterwards, could not disannul: a promise which never has been repealed, and which, without the consent of the promisee, could not in equity be made void. "Under the dispensation of the gospel (as Dr. Chandler expounds the text), there is no distinction of nation, or condition, or sex: Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, male and female, are all considered as one person in Christ." It may be observed here, that the apostle expressly speaks of all believers as constituting one person, but no one is so weak as to understand this declaration in a literal sense. How unreasonable then is it to interpret a similar phraseology literally when applied to Jesus and his heavenly Father! See John x. 30. The union of Jesus with the Father is the same as the union of all his disciples with him, with God, and with each other: a union, not of nature, but of will and purpose, a mutual co-operation in promoting the cause of truth and virtue. See John xvii. 21, 22.

⁵ *But if ye are, &c.*] *ἐἷς ἐστί ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* this is the reading of the Clermont and Corbey manuscripts, and is approved by Mr. Locke as most suitable to the apostle's argument.

Ch. III. a share in that inheritance which was promised to their spiritual ancestor,
Ver. 29. namely, that he and his descendants should partake of the blessing in consequence of faith only, without being subjected to the yoke of the ceremonial law.

16. In the prosecution of his argument the apostle further pleads, that under the legal dispensation the heirs of the promise were not only kept under restraint as children, but were treated with harshness as slaves, from which servitude they are redeemed by Christ, ch. iv. 1—5.

Ch. IV. *Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from*
Ver. 1. *a slave¹, though he be proprietor of all: but is under guardians and*
2. *stewards² until the time appointed by the father. So likewise we, when we*
3. *were children, were in bondage under the rudiments of this world³.*

I am speaking now, my friends, of the great body of those who were interested in the covenant which God made with Abraham, from the time of that eminent patriarch to the present day: all were heirs of the promise, and entitled, in due time, to the possession of this fair inheritance. But those who lived under the law were in the state of children under age; and you know that in this situation a child, though he be heir to a very large estate, is in no better condition than a slave, that he is no more at his own disposal, and has no more power over his property than the meanest servant; but that both his person and his property are under the sole direction and management of those whom his father has appointed to be his guardians and tutors, and the stewards and managers of his estate, till the time comes when by the will of his father, or by the customs and laws of his country, he is declared of age; at which time he is immediately exempted from all controul, he enjoys his

¹ *Slave:*] “so (says Mr. Locke) δαλος signifies; and St. Paul’s sense will be lost to one who by *servant* understands not one in a state of bondage.” The apostle, speaking of all the covenanted descendants of Abraham as one person, represents this person as in a state of minority, and consequent servitude under the tuition of the law; and pursues this allegory into detail.

² *Guardians and stewards.*] “ἐπιτροπος is one who is both a guardian of the person and estate, and an instructor: οικονομος is a person who has the care of the estate.” Chandler.

³ *Under the rudiments of this world.*] The rites and ceremonies of the law are called by the apostle rudiments of this world. See Col. ii. 8, 20. These are called rudiments or elements, because the law was a sort of preparatory school for the gospel: see ch. iii. 24. And the Mosaic dispensation is here and elsewhere called the world, see Gal. vi. 14, Col. ii. 20, probably because its precepts and sanctions related chiefly to worldly objects. See Locke; and Chandler, who supposes there is an allusion to the pomp of the temple service, as resembling that of the heathen mythology. The law was upon the whole a burthensome service; and therefore the Jews under it are represented as in bondage, like an heir while in a state of pupillage.

liberty, and takes possession of his property. Exactly so, the posterity of Abraham under the former dispensation, though heirs of the promise, were heirs in a state of pupillage; in bondage to that severe guardian the law, subjected to a harsh discipline, and required to learn a hard lesson; destitute of liberty, and compelled to perform a task of rites and ceremonies which constituted the essentials of a dispensation resembling, in the pomp of its external form, the rituals of heathen nations; and which only entailed temporal blessings.

But when the full time⁴ was come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman⁵, (born under the law⁶, that he might redeem⁷ those who were under the law,) that we might receive the adoption of sons⁸.

This state of subjection and servitude was however intended to continue only for a limited time; and when that time expired, which had been wisely fixed in the unsearchable counsels of heaven, God, faithful to his promise, gave an express commission to a person, chosen for this purpose out of the human race; and who, on account of the distinguished honour conferred upon him, is called the first-born son of God, to declare that the season of minority and pupillage is at an end, and that all who receive his message are now released from the stern guardianship of the law, are acknowledged as sons of God, and are admitted to the privileges and the freedom of heirs who are declared of age and put into possession of their inheritance. And to the end that those who were before in immediate subjection to the law might learn that even they are released from its burdensome yoke, this great deliverer

⁴ *The full time.*] These words refer to ver. 2, and signify the time "when the heir is declared of age and becomes *sui juris*, and takes the estate into his own hands." Chandler.

⁵ *Born of a woman.*] There is no reason to imagine a reference here to the supposed miraculous conception of Jesus Christ; for the expression, *born of a woman*, is a common periphrasis to express a human being. See Job xiv. 1, xv. 14, xxv. 4; Matt. xi. 11; Luke vii. 28. With Wakefield, Newcome, and others, I translate *γεννημενον*, *born*, in preference to *made*. Some copies read *γεννημενον*.

⁶ *Born under the law, &c.*] This clause I include in a parenthesis, with Castellio and Bengelius. See Bowyer.

⁷ *That he might redeem, &c.*] "When persons are freed from slavery, they are properly said to be redeemed. The law of Moses was a yoke upon the necks of the Jews. Now Christ came to redeem them from it, by declaring them of full age, and that the time was come for their being put into possession of the promised inheritance." Chandler.

The apostle is here speaking, not of the Jews only, though they are particularly alluded to in this parenthesis, but of all the spiritual posterity of Abraham collectively, the people of God in all ages and nations, under different dispensations of law and gospel. *We* all, whether Jews or Gentiles, under the gospel dispensation, are declared of age, and are acknowledged as sons. See Macknight.

⁸ *The adoption of sons.*] "that we who believe might be put out of the state of bondage into that of sons." Locke.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 5.

was selected from the Jewish nation; and having himself lived in subjection to the law, he by his death put an end to the legal dispensation, introducing and ratifying a new and better covenant. So that Jews and Gentiles are now alike free from the tyranny of the law, and are equally entitled by faith to the privileges of the gospel.

17. The apostle concludes his argument by referring to that filial spirit which the gospel produces in the heart, as an incontestable proof of the truth of his doctrine, ver. 6, 7.

6. *Now, to prove that ye are sons¹, God hath sent forth the spirit of his*
7. *son² into our hearts, crying out, Abba! Father³. So then, thou art no longer a slave, but a son⁴: and if a son, then an heir of God, through Christ.*

¹ To prove that ye are sons.] “as the evidence and demonstration that ye are thus constituted sons of God.” Chandler.—“to show that ye are sons.” Wakefield.

² God hath sent forth the spirit of his son.] “By the Spirit,” says Dr. Chandler, “is here unquestionably meant the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which were given in confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion, and as an immediate token from God of the acceptance of all who believed in Christ, and their being constituted through him heirs of eternal life.”—“The same argument,” says Mr. Locke, “of proving their sonship from having the spirit, St. Paul uses to the Romans, Rom. viii. 16. And he that will read 2 Cor. iv. 17 to v. 6, and Eph. i. 11—14, will find, that the *spirit* is looked on as the seal and assurance of the inheritance of life to those who have received the adoption of sons.”

It cannot be doubted that the gifts of the holy spirit were universally regarded as undeniable proofs that those who were favoured with them were in covenant with God, his people, his sons, and heirs of the promise: nevertheless, the number of those who were favoured with these gifts must have been comparatively small. But the spirit of his son, of which the apostle here speaks, he mentions as an universal quality, common to all believers. This, therefore, I conceive to be that filial spirit and disposition which the gospel produces in the hearts of those who practically believe; and which teach them to regard the Supreme Being in the character of a Father, benefactor, and friend, and to hold communion with him as such. This spirit, so opposite to that spirit of terror and alarm which was the natural effect of the law, might justly be considered as an irresistible proof of the divine authority of the gospel, and is with great propriety introduced by the apostle as the last and most substantial and affecting proof of the divinity of his doctrine. See the exposition of Rom. viii. 26, 27. The expression “God hath sent forth the spirit,” does not necessarily imply any supernatural interposition to produce a change in the heart. God is said to do that which he accomplishes by second causes; and if the principles of the gospel cordially received produce a filial spirit in the heart, God may be said to have sent forth his spirit for that purpose.—“That Christians are the genuine sons of God,” says Dr. Priestley, “the apostle proves by their having the spirit or dispositions of his sons, which they show by addressing him as their Father, which slaves would not do.” *Our hearts*, is the reading of the best copies: the received text reads, *your*.

³ *Abba, Father.*] Dr. Doddridge mentions, that “the learned Selden has brought a very pertinent quotation from the Babylonian Gemara to prove that it was not allowed to slaves to use the title of *Abba* in addressing the master of the family to which they belonged, or the correspondent title of *Imma*, or mother, when speaking to the mistress of it.”

⁴ *No longer a slave.*] He is now of age, no longer in the condition of a pupil or a ward, subject like a slave to the controul of another. The gifts of the spirit, and the filial spirit of the gospel, prove that he is a son, an heir, and in possession of the inheritance. See Rom. viii. 14—17.

To conclude: That I may remove all doubt upon the subject of your acceptance with God by faith in Christ, exclusive of the ceremonial law, I must again appeal to those miraculous powers which I exercised among you, to those spiritual gifts which I imparted to you, and which you possessed long before you thought of subjecting yourselves to the yoke of Moses, when you had heard of no conditions of acceptance but those of faith in Christ. These precious gifts, which Jesus himself possessed, which he is authorized to bestow, and which God by him has imparted to us, are substantial indisputable proofs that we are accepted by him upon the condition of faith only; and that upon this ground he acknowledges us as his children, and permits us all, whether Jews or Gentiles, to address him under the endearing character of a Father. Let every one of you therefore be assured, that being a believer in Christ, he is no longer a pupil in his minority, a slave to a harsh pedagogue, but an acknowledged son of God, an heir at age, entitled to receive the promised inheritance, to be blessed with believing Abraham, to be accepted of God by faith alone, without the works of the law; which has now no more power over the disciple of Christ than a guardian possesses over a pupil who is declared of age and released from his wardship. For this free and happy state you are indebted to the mercy and faithfulness of God revealed to us by Jesus Christ; and when the new and encouraging views of the divine character which the Christian doctrine imparts, the hope of mercy which it inspires, and the glorious prospects of immortality which it opens to view, produce their natural effects upon the heart, which they do in all true believers, and I trust in yours, exciting supreme love to God as a father and a friend, and entire devotedness to his will, a spirit so opposite to the servile spirit of the law, this affectionate filial spirit is itself the best possible proof that you are in the noblest sense sons of God, and heirs of the promised inheritance.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 7.

SECTION II.

THE APOSTLE expostulates with the Galatians concerning the unreasonableness of their apostasy from the simplicity of the gospel, and of the alienation of their affection from himself. Ch. iv. 8—20.

h. The apostle warns them, that though ignorance might be an apology

Ch. IV. for the idolatries of their heathen state, they could avail themselves of no such excuse for their present attachment to judaical rites, ver. 8—11.

Ver. 8. *At that time indeed, when ye knew not God, ye were in bondage to those*
 9. *who by nature are not gods; but now, after ye have known God, or rather have been known by God¹, how is it that ye turn back again to the weak and poor elements², to which ye desire again to be in bondage as heretofore³?*

In your heathen state, you had no knowledge of God, of his attributes, his government, or his will, nor of the nature of that worship which would be most acceptable to him: no wonder you were then the votaries of false gods, the besotted worshipers of dumb idols, the abject slaves of superstition and folly. But, now that you have been taught by the Christian religion to form just and honourable conceptions of God, and of his government and of the spiritual worship and service which he requires, and since you have by the gift of his spirit been acknowledged by him as his genuine sons, and invested with peculiar privileges, what pretence can there be for you to have recourse to the observation of mean and puerile ceremonies to recommend you to the divine regard? What could induce you, after you had obtained your freedom from heathen superstition, to enslave yourselves again to the burthensome ceremonies of the Jewish law; which, whatever important purpose they might once answer, are now superseded, and are of no kind of use to you whatever?

10, 11. *How is it⁴ that ye observe days, and months, and times, and years? I am afraid concerning you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.*

¹ *Ye have known God, or rather have been known by God.*] The apostle in his usual manner takes up his words in a different sense: to *know God*, is to form just conceptions of the object of worship, such as the gospel inspires; to *be known by God*, is to be chosen and approved by him. Amos iii. 2; 1 Cor. viii. 3. See Locke.

² *Weak and poor elements.*] “The law was weak because it could not deliver men from bondage and death, Rom. viii. 1—3: it is called poor, because it kept men in the poor state of pupils from the full possession of the inheritance, ver. 1—3.” Locke.

³ *Again as heretofore.*] “*παλιν*, again, cannot here refer to *στοιχεια*, elements, which the Galatians had never been under hitherto; but to bondage, which he tells them they had been in, to false gods, ver. 8.” Locke. See also Wakefield. Macknight renders *ανωθεν* from the first: *q. d.* “ever since your conversion.” Newcome observes, from Wetstein, that *παλιν ανωθεν* is a common pleonasm.

⁴ *How is it, &c.*] *q. d.* *πως ημερας κ. τ. λ.* “Why are ye turning back again, and are observing days,” &c. Wakefield. Dr. Chandler also reads it as an interrogation: “Do ye observe days and months?” &c. He adds, “by *days* he unquestionably means their weekly sabbaths and festivals: by *months*, the festivals of the new moons; by *times*, their annual fasts and festivals; and by *years*, their sabbatical and jubilee years.” Observe here, that it is because of their strict observation of these sabbatical seasons, and the great stress laid upon them, that the apostle expresses his fears lest he had bestowed upon them labour in vain. He never gives the least hint that a Christian sabbath had been substituted in the room of the Jewish sabbath which was to be observed with

How comes it to pass that you, who have been so plainly taught that the spiritual and liberal genius of the Christian religion makes no distinction of days, but expressly teaches that all times are equally acceptable to God, and that the whole of every day is to be employed in his service, can so easily adopt the Jewish distinction of holy and unholy days? How is it that you can lay any stress upon such matters, or imagine that you can recommend yourselves to God by a rigid observation of sabbath-days and new moons, and annual festivals or fasts, and sabbatical years? All these distinctions were wisely appointed to the Jews to keep them separate from other nations; but under the Christian dispensation, which embraces all mankind, these and all other ceremonial distinctions are abolished. Indeed, my brethren, this servile sabbatical spirit, so widely different from the free and filial spirit of the gospel, excites in my breast the most painful apprehensions lest my labours among you should have been unavailing to your conversion to pure and practical Christianity.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 11.

2. In order to recover their alienated affections, he pleads with them their former kindness, which he had done nothing to forfeit, ver. 12—16.

*Brethren, I beseech you, be what I am; for I once was what ye now are*⁵.
*Ye have not wronged me in any thing*⁶.

12.

My dear brethren in Christ, for as such I will still address you, and believe you to be such, notwithstanding all my suspicions and fears concerning you,

equal strictness; nor does he ever in any of his epistles express his disapprobation of what is called *sabbath-breaking*, or warn his readers against it. This surely must have been a very great omission, if the apostle had entertained the same ideas of the importance of sabbatizing which are inculcated by some modern Christians, who represent what they are pleased to call the *profanation of the sabbath*, as one of the greatest of crimes, which deserves the cognizance even of the civil magistrate. The plain doctrine of the New Testament is, that all sabbatical institutions without exception are completely abolished: but that seasons of religious worship should be regularly observed, and in the primitive church one of these seasons was the first day of the week. This was universally celebrated as a religious festival, in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ. See Evanson and Priestley on the sabbatical observation of the Lord's day.

⁵ *For I once was what ye now are.*] “*Fui aliquando qualis vos nunc estis.*” Vatablus. See also Clarius; and Doddridge, who expounds the words thus: “*I was as ye are*, as much bigoted to the Mosaic ritual and pharisaic traditions, as any of you all can be.” See Rom. ix. 3, Wakefield's Translation. This sense of the passage appears to me greatly preferable to that of Grotius and Locke, whose interpretation is, “*I beseech you, brethren, let you and I be as if we were all one*,” which is adopted by most modern interpreters, though Dr. Whitby acknowledges that the former is the sense in which it was understood by the fathers. Dr. Chandler's interpretation is peculiar: “*Be ye as myself*, dear and beloved as my own person, *because I was as yourselves*, I was once as much esteemed and beloved as your own persons.”

⁶ *Ye have not wronged me in any thing.*] Mr. Wakefield, upon the authority of the Æthiopic version, omits this, which he calls a strange clause; but the omission is not supported by any manuscript.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 12.

I earnestly entreat you to follow my example. I was once as zealous an advocate for Jewish rites and ceremonies as you now are; and even held them to be essential to the divine favour. But I now see my error. I am instructed in the true nature of Christian liberty. I am convinced that rites and ceremonies are of no use; that the law of Christ requires nothing as essential to an interest in its blessings, but love to God and benevolence to man: that nothing will be of any avail but a good heart and a virtuous life. Let me prevail upon you, my friends, to adopt the same just and generous latitude of principle. You will feel yourselves better and happier for it. You now, indeed, regard me, with a degree of coldness and suspicion very different from your former kind and fervent affection. But I know the cause, and I forgive it. You have done me no wrong; nor is the seeming asperity of my language the effect of resentment or revenge: it is the dictate of genuine friendship.

13. *Now ye know that, under bodily infirmity¹, I preached the gospel to you*
 14. *at first; and my personal affliction ye did not despise, nor disdainfully reject me for it²; but ye received me as a messenger of God³, even as Christ Jesus.*

I shall never forget the kindness with which you first received me. You recollect, my friends, the bodily infirmity under which I then laboured; how great an impediment it was to me as a public speaker; what an awkwardness it occasioned in my manner of address. Yet you neither despised nor insulted me upon that account: nor did you contemptuously reject my mission and ministry. Far from it. I well remember the avidity with which you listened to my instructions. Impressed with the proofs which I exhi-

¹ *Under bodily infirmity.*] Literally, *through or in* (*διὰ*, see Macknight) *weakness of the flesh*: this he calls in the next verse a personal affliction; literally, *my trial in my flesh*. Dr. Hammond supposes that the apostle alludes to the persecutions which he underwent; but this could be no ground for contempt or scorn. There can be little doubt that he alludes to some bodily infirmity; perhaps to some paralytic affection, which, 2 Cor. xii. 7, he calls a thorn in the flesh; and which was probably a considerable disadvantage to him as a public speaker. Mr. Locke justly observes, that “this is an instance of that unavoidable obscurity of some passages in epistolary writings, without any fault in the author. For some things necessary to the understanding of what is writ are usually of course, and justly omitted, because already known to him the letter is writ to.”

² *Disdainfully reject me for it.*] *ἐξέπτυσάτε*. See Wakefield. Literally, “ye did not spit me out.” Wakefield.

³ *A messenger of God.*] *αγγελον Θεου*. See Wakefield; *q. d.* “you received me as you would have received an acknowledged prophet of God; nay, as you would have received Jesus Christ himself, the greatest of all the prophets.” It is needless to cite authorities to prove that the word *αγγελος*, in its primary sense, signifies a messenger, and not a celestial spirit. And it is sufficiently obvious that this text gives no countenance to the popular doctrine that Jesus Christ is in his nature superior to the angels in heaven.

bited of my divine commission, you received me as a messenger of God; nor could you have shown greater attention and respect to Jesus Christ himself, had he appeared to preach the gospel to you in person. Ch. IV.
Ver. 14.

What were, then, your benedictions⁴? For I bear you witness, that had it been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me. 15.

How thankful you were for my instructions! How kindly you spake of me and to me! You thought you never could do enough to show your affection and your gratitude. I never can forget your kind attachment. There was no sacrifice which you would not readily have made to serve me.

Am I, then, become your enemy, by continuing⁵ to tell you the truth? 16.

What can be the reason of this extraordinary change? How can I account for the coldness, the unkindness, which I now experience from you? Is my constancy the cause of your change? I taught you the truth, and thereby I gained your attention and your love. I still continue to teach the same important truth; and is this the occasion of your present dislike? Can the same cause produce effects so directly opposite to each other?

3. The apostle charges his opponents with a desire to make a breach between the Galatians and himself, in which he hopes they will not succeed, though he is not wholly free from some painful suspicions, ver. 17—20.

They zealously affect you, not with a good design⁶; yea, they desire to exclude you⁷, that ye may zealously affect them. 17.

⁴ *What were, then, your benedictions?* [τις ἐν ὁ μακαρισμός ὑμῶν; “What benedictions did you then pour out upon me! The context makes this sense of the words so necessary and visible, that it is to be wondered how any one could overlook it.” Locke. “What was, then, your happiness! How great your satisfaction!” Chandler; who adds, “With what address he puts them in mind of their former affection to him, every man must see who reads the next words.” Macknight says that “Locke’s interpretation is unusual; and the word is used to denote ‘blessedness’ in other passages of the apostle’s writings.” Rom. iv. 6, 9.

⁵ *By continuing to tell you the truth?* [αληθευων. See Locke. “by dealing truly with you?” Wakefield. “Am I now become your enemy, only because I warn you against corrupting or forsaking that very gospel, and exhort you to adhere to the truth and purity of it? How severely, and yet how softly, doth he reproach them for their fickleness and inconstancy! How strong is the reproof which is thus drawn from arguments of love!” Chandler.

⁶ *Not with a good design.* [καλῶς. “Their zeal for you is not for your good.” Wakefield, “It is not with a good design, nor by lawful arts and methods, that they thus endeavour to inveigle your affections: it is not by endeavouring to promote your salvation, or preaching the truth of the gospel of Christ.” Chandler. “Ζηλεῖν aliquem dicitur qui valde ab eo amari affectat. Amorem vestrum captant non honestè. Sermo est de falsis illis doctoribus de quibus hactenus locutus erat; quibus autem artibus illi usi fuerint, non constat.” Rosenmuller.

⁷ *To exclude you.* [“They would exclude you from the privileges of Christians, or from my affections.” Newcome. Some copies read ἡμᾶς, us: q. d. they would exclude me from your affection. See Locke. Beza.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 17.

My opponents pretend to have a great affection for you, and to be very solicitous to make you Christians of the highest order: but they are not influenced by right motives; nor do they proceed in a right method when they expect to accomplish their design by subjecting you to the yoke of the law. In fact, they desire to exclude you from the privileges of the gospel, and to cut you off from all communication with me, that so you may be entirely devoted to them, and may submit in every thing to their direction.

18. *But it is honourable to be at all times zealously affected to that which is*
19. *good¹; and not only when I am present with you, my dear children², of*
whom I labour in birth again, till Christ be formed in you.

But surely, my dear children in the gospel, you, of whose conversion to the faith I was the happy and the honoured instrument; and for whose restoration to the genuine principles and spirit of Christianity I am at present most tenderly solicitous, and feel a truly parental anxiety, you cannot but see and acknowledge that it is right and creditable that you should be at all times equally well affected to what is excellent, either in principles or persons; and not expose yourselves to the suspicion of fickleness and caprice. If you had a well-founded attachment to me and to my doctrine while I was present with you, you ought not, without reason, to have deserted both, after I had left you to prosecute the further purposes of my mission.

20. *But I wish to be present with you now, and to change my language³; for*
I am in doubt concerning you.

I have not, indeed, much hope that what I write will produce all the effect which I desire; and therefore I wish that I might be permitted, even now, to make you a visit. A personal interview would set all right; and nothing would afford me greater satisfaction than to exchange the language of suspicion and censure for that of commendation.

¹ *To that which is good.*] εν καλω. "towards a good man." Locke. So Wakefield. This is, no doubt, the apostle's meaning; but the expression is purposely left ambiguous.

² *My dear children.*] With Beza, Bos, Bengel, and others, I connect these words with verse 18. See Bowyer.

³ *Change my language.*] "φωνη signifies not only the voice, but the thing spoken; he should be glad to be present, and to converse with them personally, instead of writing to them at a distance; because then he could be more fully informed of their true state, and better able to know how to order his discourse to them." Chandler.

SECTION III.

THE APOSTLE, by a figurative application of the history of the descendants of Abraham, by Sarah and Hagar, illustrates the opposite genius and tendency of the two dispensations of the law and the gospel. Ch. iv. 21—v. 1.

1. He briefly touches upon the circumstances of the history from which his illustration is taken, ver. 21—23.

*Tell me, ye who desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?*⁴ Ver. 21.

Many of you are strangely attached to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic institution. Allow me to ask you, Do you really understand the law of Moses? Are you apprized of its nature and tendency? Are you willing to learn from the pentateuch itself the distinction, and even the opposition, which subsists between the old dispensation and the new? If you are desirous of instruction, I will put the case in such a form that you cannot fail to understand it, and to be impressed by it.

*For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, one by a bond-woman, and another by a free-woman. Now the son of the bond-woman was born after the usual manner*⁵; *but the son of the free-woman in consequence of the promise*⁶.

The sacred historian relates, that the patriarch Abraham, when advanced in years, had two sons: the elder of whom, Ishmael, was the son of a concubine, a female slave, in the circumstances of whose birth nothing extraordi-

⁴ *Do ye not hear the law?*] “The law is sometimes used for the books of the Old Testament in general. See John x. 34.” Newcome. This account is taken from the book of Genesis, ch. xvi. 15, xxi. 1. The pentateuch is usually called the law, as distinguished from the prophets and the hagiography. “*ἀκούειν, intelligere, 1 Cor. xiv. 2. Libri sacri, inquit Paulus, vobis noti sunt. Facile igitur intelligetis, quæ ex iis nunc proferam. Noluit autem nunc ex libris sacris argumenta petere, sed illustrare rem quam tractabat, ad oblectandum, ut tarditatem excitaret.*” Rosenmüller.

⁵ *After the usual manner.*] So Wakefield. *κατὰ σαρκά, “according to the flesh.” “according to the course of nature.”* Worsley.

⁶ *In consequence of the promise.*] So Wakefield. *διὰ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, through the promise. “by virtue of the promise.”* Locke, Chandler.

“There is so great boldness,” says Dr. Priestley, “in the apostle’s allegorizing of the history of Sarah and Hagar, that it cannot be supposed that he really thought that it was originally intended to be applied as he does it. But he made choice of this portion of scripture, in order to express his own idea of the different states of the judaizing Christians, and the Gentile converts: the former as in a state of bondage, the latter as free.”

Ch. IV.
Ver. 23.

nary occurred. The younger, Isaac, was the son of Sarah, a free-woman, the patriarch's lawful wife; the child of a divine promise, born in a supernatural way, when both his parents were very far advanced in years.

2. The apostle illustrates the different genius and spirit of the two dispensations, from the incidents which occur in the history of Abraham's two sons, ver. 24—30.

1.) One of these sons was born under the condition of servitude, and the other of liberty, ver. 24—26.

24. *Which circumstances may be allegorized*¹.

The historian relates a plain matter of fact; but the narrative contains incidents which, in a figurative application, so happily illustrate the subject upon which I am now treating, that I shall take the liberty of accommodating them to it, as though they had been written for that express purpose.

*For these women are two covenants*²: *the one from Mount Sinai, bear-*

¹ *May be allegorized.*] ἃ τινὰ εἰν ἀλληγορευμένα. See Doddridge and Chandler. "are spoken by me allegorically." Newcome; who suspects the words to be a marginal note. They are not in the Æthiopic. "which things have a further meaning." Wakefield. It is plain that the apostle does not mean to represent the history as an allegory; or to insinuate that it was intended by the writer to contain any mystical signification. He only applies the circumstances of the history to the illustration of the subject in hand.

Mr. Peirce of Exeter, in his dissertation upon the text, translates these words "*which things are allegorized*:" and his (*the apostle's*) meaning is, that the prophet Isaiah, whose words he cites, ver. 27, has from this history borrowed the terms, wherein he hath expressed himself in a very fine and noble allegory. This rendering is exactly grammatical, and sets the apostle's discourse in a different light; and offers nothing but what is familiar in all languages, and in all authors."

² *These women are two covenants.*] Griesbach drops the article before δύο. Bishop Pearce's emendation of the text in his *Epistolæ Duæ*, Opp. ver. 2, p. 464, is, to say the least, very ingenious, and by some may be preferred.

1.) For δαλευει δε he reads δαλευει γαρ, ver. 25, upon the best authorities. 2.) For το γαρ Αγαρ he reads το δε γαρ δε is inserted and Αγαρ is wanting in many copies. See Griesbach. 3.) The word νυν is omitted before Ιερουσαλημ in the Arabic and Syriac versions; and is suspected by the bishop to have been inserted by some officious scribe to correspond with ανω in the following verse. 4.) By conjecture he substitutes απο for ανω, ver. 26; which is a very small alteration, as the ancients commonly wrote ο for ω. And this slight change makes the two verses exactly correspond with each other; and the parallelism holds in all its parts. The following is the bishop's translation of the three verses:

"*Hæc enim sunt duo fœdera: unum quidem a monte Sina ad servitutem generans, quod est Agar (hic enim (sc. mons) Sina mons est in Arabia, et conjunctus est Hierosolymæ); servit enim cum filiis suis. Hoc autem (sc. fœdus) ab Hierosolymâ est libera (sc. Sara), quæ est mater omnium nostrum.*"

For these are two covenants: one from mount Sinai bearing children to bondage, which is Hagar (now this Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which joins to Jerusalem); for she is in bondage with her children. But the other from Jerusalem is the free-woman, which is the mother of us all, or, *our mother*. See Griesbach; who drops παντων. The bishop, who renders συστοιχει *conjunctus est*, according to the Vulgate and Arabic, has no doubt of the 25th verse being a marginal gloss.

ing children to bondage, which is Hagar, (now this Sinai is a mountain in Arabia,) who answereth to the Jerusalem now existing, for she is in bondage with her children; but the upper Jerusalem is the free-woman, who is our mother.

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Ver. 25.

26.

In the parallel which I propose to draw, in order to illustrate the genius of the different dispensations, the two women stand for the two covenants, the Mosaic and the Christian. Hagar, the bond-woman, represents the Mosaic institution, delivered in solemn pomp by God himself to the children of Israel, from mount Sinai in Arabia. And, as the son of Hagar was born a slave, so all the children of the Sinai covenant, that is, all the Jewish people, and all who regard the temple at Jerusalem as the only authorized edifice for the peculiar solemnities of divine worship, are now, and ever have been, in a state of servitude; tied down to certain prescribed rites and ceremonies, some of which were painful, some expensive, and some inconvenient; and which, in themselves, were of no moral use. But, on the other hand, Sarah, the lawful wife of Abraham, the free-woman, represents the new covenant, which descended from above; and which is the charter of that holy and happy community which is justly called the new and heavenly Jerusalem³. All

Upon Bishop Pearce's statement, Mr. Peirce observes, "that the bishop has given a very unusual, if not unauthorized sense to the verb συζυγεί, and that there is no authority but the Arabic for leaving out the word συζυγεί. Upon which ground, a friend of Mr. Peirce has proposed the following improvement upon the bishop's version:

"The one covenant, from mount Sinai, bearing children to bondage, is Hagar, (for this mount Sinai is in Arabia, and answereth, in one part of the allegory, to the city, now called Jerusalem, in the other,) for she is in bondage with her children. But the other covenant, from Jerusalem, is the free-woman, Sarah, who is the mother of us all," or, our mother, i. e. of us Gentiles, who are, therefore, free-born, and children of the promise.

³ The heavenly Jerusalem,] or, according to the ingenious, and perhaps correct, suggestion of Bishop Pearce, the paraphrase would stand thus: "But Sarah, the free-woman, the lawful wife of Abraham, represents the other covenant, which was lately promulgated from the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus opened his gracious commission; where he lived and taught, and wrought miracles, and suffered death upon the cross, and rose again, and ascended to the right hand of God. Where he commissioned his apostles to teach his gospel to all nations, and endowed them with the gifts of the holy spirit, to confirm their doctrine. All her children are freeborn," &c.

Upon the whole, I prefer the simplicity of Bishop Pearce's interpretation; though Dr. Chandler's illustration of the common interpretation of the allegory is very beautiful.

"By the heavenly Jerusalem," says this learned and eloquent writer, "the apostle means the Christian church; which is a regular or well-ordered city or community, expressly called, Heb. xii. 22, Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; the inhabitants or members of which are, the innumerable company of angels, the general assembly of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect. The great Lord and Governor of which is God, the judge of all. The great Mediator, who formed this city, and established this commonwealth, and introduces that covenant which contains the charter of its privileges, and the laws of its government, and who rules and governs under God, is the blessed Jesus. Upon which account the Christian church is very beautifully denoted by the heavenly Jerusalem, as a city which hath

Ch. IV.
Ver. 26.

her children are born free, and are entitled to all the privileges of their high descent. They breathe the spirit of liberty, and are under no subjection to those servile conditions, to those harsh and degrading restraints to which the sons of the bond-woman were exposed. Now we, my friends, are these very persons: children of the free-woman; we are free-born, and, as believers in Christ, we are at liberty from all the restraints and burdens of the ceremonial law; and are the approved citizens of this new and glorious community.

2.) The analogy applies to the relative numbers of their respective descendants, ver. 27, 28.

27. *Moreover*¹, *it is written*², *Rejoice, thou barren, who bearest not; break forth and shout, thou who travailest not in birth, for many more are the*

the immediate symbols of the divine presence, and is the place of God's residence, by his holy spirit. It is his favourite city, under his peculiar protection and government."

For the proper explanation of these phrases in the epistle to the Hebrews, see the paraphrase and notes upon the text in that epistle.

¹ *Moreover.*] *γὰρ* is not here an illative particle, but introduces a collateral observation. The apostle having pointed out the principal circumstances of the parallel, namely, servitude and liberty, other incidental circumstances of resemblance occur to him as he is writing, which he here notices.

² *It is written.*] The text cited is Isaiah liv. 1; which is thus translated by Bishop Lowth: "Shout for joy, O thou barren, that didst not bear. Break forth into joyful shouting, and exult, thou that didst not travail; for more are the children of the desolate than of the married woman, saith Jehovah." "The church of God," says the bishop, "under the Old Testament, confined within the narrow bounds of the Jewish nation, and still more so in respect of the small number of true believers; and which sometimes seemed to be deserted of God, her husband, is the barren woman that did not bear, and was desolate: she is exhorted to rejoice, and to express her joy in the strongest manner, on the reconciliation of her husband, ver. 6; and on the accession of the Gentiles to her family. The converted Gentiles are all along considered by the prophet as a new accession of adopted children, admitted into the original church of God, and united with it. See ch. xlix. 20, 21."

Mr. Peirce considers this text, which the apostle cites from the prophet Isaiah, as containing the allegory to which he alludes, and which he here pursues. And, in order to this, Mr. P. takes much pains to show that the females alluded to by the prophet are Sarah and Hagar. "*Rejoice, thou barren, &c., q. d.* How earnestly was Sarah desirous of being a mother! and how did she rejoice and triumph when she had a son! *For the desolate hath many more children than she that hath a husband:* She that was, with respect to having children, as if she had no husband, Abraham being superannuated, and herself being past age, hath many more children, &c. See Rom. iv. 19; Heb. xi. 11, 12. Hence she is spoken of as desolate, as having, in a manner, no husband. Hagar, though a bond-woman, was Abraham's wife, Gen. xvi. 3, and there being nothing supernatural in the birth of Ishmael, she is said to have a husband. In short, therefore, the thing allegorized by the prophet is this: that Sarah, who had been so long barren, did at last, by virtue of the promise of God, and his extraordinary blessing, bear a child to superannuated Abraham, contrary to the course of nature, and became the mother of a more numerous posterity than Hagar was, who had a child by him according to the course of nature."

Mr. Peirce further contends, that this prophecy properly applies to the accession of the Gentiles to the church, and consequently that the apostle "has explained this passage according to its original intent and design."

children of the desolate than of her that hath an husband. Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. Ch. IV. Ver. 28.

While I am writing, another circumstance of resemblance occurs strongly to my mind; which is, indeed, most encouraging and worthy of being mentioned. The posterity of Abraham by Ishmael were, agreeably to the divine promise, very numerous and powerful; and this long before the descendants of Isaac made any figure in the world, or had a place among the nations: but in the end, the promise to the patriarch was completely fulfilled; and the posterity of Sarah, though she was childless many years after the birth of Ishmael, and utterly despaired of having a son, greatly exceeded, both in numbers and in renown, the posterity of the bond-woman. Such shall be the final state of the Christian community, compared with that of Moses. To this the prophet alludes when he calls upon the desolate and childless woman to rejoice and exult; for that in due time she shall be blessed with an offspring more numerous and prosperous than that of her who was married, and who first vaunted of a family. We, my brethren, who believe in Christ, are the promised posterity here alluded to; and though our numbers are at present few, and apparently inconsiderable, be assured that, in due season, the divine promise will be amply and gloriously fulfilled, and the number of those who will be eventually admitted to share in the blessings and privileges of the gospel will greatly exceed that of the Jewish church in its most extended and prosperous state.

3.) The parallel holds still further, in respect to the unworthy treatment of the son of the free woman by the son of the slave, ver. 29.

But as then, he that was born according to the flesh³ persecuted him⁴ that was born according to the spirit, even so it is now. 29.

And, to pursue the allegory a little further, the history relates, Gen. xxi. 9, that Ishmael the son of Hagar, who was an insolent and haughty youth, and who, valuing himself upon being the first-born, expected no doubt the great-

³ *According to the flesh.*] *κατα σαρκα*, in the natural way. *κατα πνευμα*, in a supernatural way, and by virtue of a divine promise, see ver. 23.

⁴ *Persecuted.*] See Gen. xxi. 9. "The history tells us that he laughed at, derided, and mocked him to scorn, which is real persecution; probably through pride, and the conceit of his being Abraham's eldest son and heir." Chandler. "Hence we may learn," says Mr. Peirce, in his note on the passage, "that men may be guilty of persecuting, in the apostle's apprehension, without practising any open force and violence, when they treat others scornfully and abusively. Nor is it hard for men to be really persecutors, when they little imagine they are so; as no doubt the Jews in the apostle's time little thought they were chargeable with such a crime, when they used violence, but supposed they were doing God service."

Ch. IV.
Ver. 29.

est share in his father's affection, and the largest portion of his wealth, treated with scorn the infant Isaac, the child of the free woman, the heir of promise, as the feeble offspring of decrepit age : so do the unbelieving Jews, the parties in the first covenant, now treat their younger brethren the believers in Christ, the free-born sons of God, and the true heirs of the promises ; whom they regard with malignity and envy, and by every means of insult and injury are endeavouring to crush in its infancy the new and the chosen generation.

4.) The apostle closes the parallel with insinuating that the fate of the Jews will resemble that of the son of the bond-woman, ver. 30.

30. *But what saith the scripture¹ ? " Cast out this bond-woman and her son ; for the son of this bond-woman shall not share the inheritance with the son of the free-woman."*

With reluctance I point out a fourth particular of resemblance, in which it is to be feared that the analogy will too closely apply. For, look into the sacred history, and what do you find to be the issue of the story ? (Gen. xxi. 10, 12.) The mother of the free-born child, resenting the insult offered to her infant and herself, insists upon the banishment of the slave and her son as a punishment for his insolence : and this sentence, however cruel and unjustifiable in the party who pronounced it, is for wise reasons confirmed by God, who consoled the reluctant father by the promise of protection to his exiled offspring. But the decree was ratified and executed in its utmost rigour : the son of the bond-woman shall be rejected, and shall have no participation whatever in the privileges of the child of promise. How far this declaration applies to the present state of my unhappy and deluded countrymen, I must

¹ *What saith the scripture ?* i. e. what saith the history ? See Gen. xxi. 10, 13. The apostle could not mean to insinuate that Sarah was inspired when she formed the cruel resolution of turning Hagar and Ishmael out of doors ; though for wise reasons God permitted the event to take place, and promised Abraham to protect both the mother and the child. The apostle touches with great delicacy upon the rejection of the Jews, and leaves his reader to draw his own conclusion from the fact which he states. Dr. Newcome observes, that " it is probable that St. Paul thus adapted a part of the Mosaic history to his purpose, not only because it was conformable to the manner of teaching among the Jews, but that he might convey to his countrymen harsh truths indirectly and with address."

" Such arguing, or such a comparing of things as this," says Peirce, " is always reckoned allowable ; nor does any one imagine that he who uses it esteems the thing from which the argument is drawn to have been any prediction or type of that which is inferred from it ; but it is only a reasoning from the like causes in different cases, which is certainly strong and convincing."

leave to your own reflections ; it is a subject upon which it is too painful for me to insist. Ch. IV.
Ver. 30.

3. The apostle concludes with an exhortation to believers to adhere to the liberty into which they have been introduced by Christ, ver. 31, ch. v. ver. 1.

So then, brethren², we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free-woman : continue stedfast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free³, and do not by going backwards⁴ encumber yourselves with a yoke of bondage⁵. 31.
Ch. V.
Ver. 1.

By our conversion to the Christian religion we are regenerated, we are free-born, heirs of liberty and not of servitude ; we are children of the promise, subject to no servile restraint or servile terror : filial obedience flowing from filial love is the only law which we are required to obey, and we are heirs of an everlasting inheritance. For this liberty we are indebted to Jesus, our Master and elder brother ; who has published and sealed the charter of our freedom, and has admitted us into that free and happy community of which he is the head. Learn, therefore, the value of your privileges : hold fast your Christian liberty : let no one bring you into bondage. Submit to no human impositions inconsistent with the authority of Christ : do not voluntarily enslave yourselves : make no addition to the institutes of Christ : cherish a filial and a liberal spirit ; and let your religious homage be that of love and not of terror.

² *So then, brethren.*] I agree with Locke, Peirce, Bowyer, Doddridge, Newcome, and other critics, in joining the first verse of the fifth chapter with the last of the fourth. It is the conclusion drawn from the preceding premises. The apostle by his allegory had been illustrating and establishing the proposition, that Christians are the free-born sons of God : he now exhorts them stedfastly to adhere to their Christian liberty.

³ *With which Christ hath made us free.*] The gospel which Jesus published is the charter of our liberties, and by the profession of Christianity we are admitted into the freedom of that community of which he is the head.

⁴ *By going backwards.*] “παλιν is used for *retrorsum*, and perhaps that may better suit this place and Gal. iv. 9, and so the meaning here will be, ‘Don’t by going backwards entangle yourselves with a yoke of bondage.’” Peirce. “Be not again put under the yoke of servitude.” Newcome. “Fasten not yourselves in a yoke of slavery.” Wakefield ; who with the Syriac and Coptic omits παλιν.

⁵ *Encumber yourselves.*] “The original word *εφεσθη* signifies to be bound or held under a yoke,” &c. Chandler.

SECTION IV.

Ch. V. *THE APOSTLE solemnly warns the Galatians, that a voluntary subjection to the ceremonial law excludes a man from the privileges of the gospel; he condemns the Judaizing teacher, and clears his own character from the imputation of preaching up the universal obligation of legal rites. Ch. v. 2—12.*

1. The apostle insists, that voluntary submission to circumcision is a virtual obligation to yield subjection to the law, and a renunciation of the privileges of the gospel, ver. 2—4.

Ver. 2. *Behold, I Paul¹ declare to you, that if ye submit to circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing².*

You are free-born, you are entitled to all the privileges of children by faith in Christ; you are in want of nothing which those who lived under the Mosaic ritual could claim. Maintain firmly your invaluable rights. Beware of giving way in the first instance; for I myself, I who am represented as preaching one doctrine at one place, and another at another; I, the depreciated and calumniated Paul, do most solemnly and explicitly assure you, that if you submit to circumcision, your profession of Christianity will be of no use to you at all.

3. *Yea, I testify again³ to every one who submits to circumcision, that he is bound to perform the whole law.*

¹ *I Paul.*] *q. d.* “who am an apostle of Christ by the special designation of God.” Chandler.—“who am falsely reported to preach up circumcision in other places.” Locke: which is the more probable interpretation.

² *Christ will profit you nothing.*] The apostle could not mean to say, that submission to the rite of circumcision would exclude men from salvation and future happiness: he must therefore be understood as speaking of a title to external privileges only. Circumcision was initiation into the Jewish covenant; to the blessings of which they would be entitled if they kept the law without any deviation. Faith was the initiation into the Christian covenant, and the title to its privileges. But they who submitted to circumcision, thereby virtually declared that they preferred the legal mode to the evangelical mode of obtaining covenant privileges: *i. e.* they renounced the gracious scheme of the gospel for the rigours of the law, and they must take the consequence; they must punctually fulfill the law, or they forfeit the blessings, the privileges of the community of the children of God.

³ *I testify again, &c.*] The apostle repeats the sentiment, with some variation of phrase to increase the impression. See Newcome. Some of the most ancient copies omit *παλιν*. See Griesbach. Perhaps this is preferable: *q. d.* Christ is of no use; and, what is more, you are bound to keep the whole law, or your circumcision will do you no good. Or, the third verse is

As an apostle of Christ, qualified and authorized to determine the case, I give it as my decided judgement, that every one who voluntarily submits to circumcision voluntarily binds himself to observe the whole law: his conduct will admit of no other interpretation. Symbolical actions have no meaning, if they do not teach that whoever consents to be initiated into any society, or profession, does virtually oblige himself to submit to all the rules and engagements of that profession: so that you not only forfeit all your Christian privileges, but you incur obligations which it is impossible to fulfill. Christ would have set you free: but you reject his offer.

Ch. V.
Ver. 3.

Ye who seek to be justified⁴ by the law have renounced Christ⁵; ye have fallen from the dispensation of grace⁶.

4.

You cannot be both Jews and Christians: if you seek divine favour by the ceremonies of the law, you renounce your claim to it upon the ground of faith. If you choose justification by obedience to a ritual, you virtually and absolutely decline all claim to it by a method which releases you from ritual obligation. If you rely upon the law, you have done with the gospel: it is of no more use to you than if it had never existed. You have forsaken the gentle yoke of Christ, and have subjected yourselves to the heavy and insupportable burden of the law. You have passed the sentence of exclusion upon yourselves, and you must abide by the consequences.

2. The apostle declares, that the true disciples of Christ entertain no hope but what is founded upon an operative faith, ver. 5, 6.

For we⁷, by the spirit⁸, expect from faith that justification which is the object of our hope⁹.

5.

an amplification of the second: *q. d.* Christ is of no use. Why? Because you bind yourselves to keep the law, from which Christ would have set you free.

⁴ *Ye who seek to be justified.*] δικαιωθε, who are justified. See Newcome.

⁵ *Ye have renounced Christ.*] κατηργηθητε απο τῆς Χρις, ye are abolished from Christ, wholly separated from him, as a woman from her husband by his death. Rom. vii. 2; 2 Tim. i. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 24—26. “κατ. απο τινος, is dicitur qui immunis, liber est ab aliqua re, non amplius rem cum aliquo habet.” Schleusner. See Chandler.—“ye have done with Christ.” Wakefield.—“Καταργειν denotat vim, pretium, auctoritatem rei detrahere, deinde etiam, cessare facere. Hinc κατ. απο τινος, alienum esse ab aliquo, nihil amplius rei cum eo habere.” Rosenmuller.

⁶ *Fallen from grace.*] “from the covenant of grace.” Locke. Χρις is here, as often elsewhere, put for the gospel dispensation, which is a dispensation of mercy. John i. 16, 17. They had fallen from grace, not as excluding themselves from eternal life, but as renouncing the gospel for the Jewish dispensation, and preferring the mode of justification by ceremonial institutions to justification by faith.

⁷ *For we.*] The apostle himself, and all consistent believers together with him. See Locke.

⁸ *By the spirit.*] i. e. being so taught by the gospel dispensation; which is here called the spirit. See ch. iii. 3, 5. Newcome, Locke.

⁹ *Justification which is the object of our hope.*] Literally, “the hope of justification.”—“We

Ch. V.
Ver. 5.

I do not speak lightly upon this subject; for, whatever you may have heard to the contrary, I persist in assuring you that I myself, and all who listen to my instructions, all in every place who are true and consistent believers in Christ, have learned from the gospel to depend upon faith alone, a sincere practical faith exclusive of all ceremonial institutes, for that acceptance with God, here and hereafter, which is the great object of our desire and hope.

6. *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which operates by love*¹.

To sum up all in a few words: The truth of the case is, that to a believer in Christ it is a matter of no consequence whether antecedently to his conversion he was a Jew or a heathen. All that is now required of him is, to believe in the divine mission of Christ, and to live in the habitual exercise of love to God and benevolence to man. A lively operative faith is the essential and the only condition of securing an interest in the privileges and the promises of the gospel.

3. The apostle expostulates with the Galatians on their declension from the truth, and clears himself from the suspicion of having been the occasion of their error, ver. 7, 8.

7. *Ye were running well: who has intercepted you*², *that ye should not con-*
8. *tinue to obey the truth? This persuasion*³ *doth not come from him who*
*called you*⁴.

who follow the truth of the gospel and the doctrine of the spirit of God, have no other hope of justification but by faith in Christ." Locke.

¹ *Faith which operates by love.*] *q. d.* Under the new dispensation ceremonies are nothing, practical faith is every thing. See ch. vi. δι' ἀγαπῆς ἐνεργουμένη, "rendered effectual or made operative by love; which shows itself to be a living active principle, by producing the fruit of obedience. *q. d.* Under the gospel, faith is all in all; even that firm belief of the Christian religion which influences to, and produces, a sincere love of God and our neighbour." Chandler.

² *Who has intercepted you.*] ἐνεκοψέ this is the reading of the best copies. See Griesbach. ἐγκοπῶ, ἐμποδίζω. Hesychius, Phavorinus. "metaphorice, interpello, impedio." Schleusner.—"It is an Olympic expression, answerable to ἐτρεχέτε, and properly signifies coming across the course while another is running in it, in such a manner as to jostle and throw him out of the way." Doddridge.

³ *This persuasion.*] ἡ πεισμογή, an allusion in St. Paul's manner to the preceding word πειθεσθαι. *q. d.* that ye should not obey the truth. This obedience, which you now pay to the law, cometh not from him who called you. See Locke. N.B. The clause τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μὴ πειθεσθαι was wanting in some of Jerome's copies, and in the Syriac, and is supposed to have been introduced from ch. iii. 1; where, however, it is wanting in the best copies. See Bowyer; and Griesbach, who also marks it as wanting in Chrysostom.

⁴ *Him who called you.*] Meaning himself: see ch. i. 6. "The apostle argues thus: You were going on well in the liberty of the gospel: who stopped you? I, you may be sure, had no hand in it; I, you know, called you to liberty, and not to subjection to the law, and therefore you can by no means suppose that I should preach of circumcision." Locke.

When I left Galatia you were advancing in your Christian course with speed and vigour: you understood the principles of the Christian doctrine, and you adorned them by your practice: you valued your Christian liberty, and exulted in your freedom. How came this unhappy change to take place? What busy intruder has thrust you out of your way, and given you a bias contrary to truth? Your first instructor in the principles of Christianity is not responsible for this obliquity of conduct. I set you in the right way; it is some evil-minded person who has since perverted your steps, and turned you astray.

Ch. V.
Ver. 8.

4. The apostle warns them against the progressive tendency of error, and expresses his hope that the Galatians will animadvert with due severity upon the corrupter of their faith and the disturber of their peace, ver. 9, 10.

*A little leaven leaveneth the whole mass*⁵.

9.

Erroneous principles admitted and encouraged will gradually spread, and will diffuse their influence through the whole society; and though there may be but few at present who embrace or propagate them, yet if proper methods are not taken to check their progress, their abettors will increase, and the whole church will gradually be infected by them.

*But I have confidence in you through the Lord*⁶, *that ye will not think differently from me; but he who troubleth you shall bear his judgement*⁷, *whosoever he be.*

10.

Notwithstanding the success which erroneous doctrines have met with among you, and the anxiety which I suffer on your account, my hopes still prevail over my apprehensions; and I entertain a sanguine expectation that you are so well founded in the principles of the Christian religion, that you will still adhere faithfully to the doctrine which you learned from me;

⁵ *A little leaven, &c.*] Mr. Locke infers from this and the next verse, that all this disorder arose from one man. "A few seducers may corrupt all." Newcome. See 1 Cor. v. 6.

⁶ *Confidence in you through the Lord.*] εν Κυριω. "the utmost confidence in you." Wakefield. He translates the next clause, "that ye will not alter your minds."—"I have confidence in you, that by the help of the Lord you will all be of this same mind with me; you will beware of this leaven, so as not to be put into a ferment, nor shaken in your liberty, which you ought to stand fast in; and to secure it, I doubt not, such confidence I have in you, will with one accord cast out him that troubles you. For, as for me, you may be sure I am not for circumcision, in that the Jews continue to persecute me. This is evidently his meaning, though not spoken out, but managed warily, with a very skilful and moving insinuation: for, as he says of himself, ch. iv. 20, he knew not at that distance what temper they were in." Locke.

⁷ *Shall bear his judgement.*] "Such judgement might be censure, excommunication, or the infliction of some bodily disease. It might be future punishment also, the case of impenitence being supposed." Newcome. Mr. Locke understands κριμα as signifying expulsion by church censure, as in the case of the Corinthian fornicator.

Ch. V.
Ver. 10.

and, as a proof it, that you will pass a proper censure upon that seducing teacher who would pervert your faith and disturb your peace, whatever his rank, his abilities, or his influence may be.

5. The apostle appeals to his persecutions as proofs of the consistency of his doctrines, and insists upon the exclusion of the disturbers of their peace from their society, ver. 11, 12.

11. *But as for me, brethren, if I still preach circumcision¹, why do I still*
12. *suffer persecution? the scandal of the cross would then be abolished. I wish that they might even be cut off² who trouble you.*

I am represented as an advocate for the imposition of the Mosaic ritual; but of this calumny the persecutions which I endure are an ample and public refutation. My chief persecutors are my own countrymen; and the principal ground of their enmity is the doctrine which I every where teach

¹ *If I still, &c.]* A plain intimation that he had been misrepresented to the Galatians as having insisted upon the obligation of the law in other places, though he had held different language there. His persecutions demonstrated the falsehood of this calumny; for they were instigated by the Jews, and chiefly for this reason, that he boldly maintained the liberty of the converted Gentiles from the yoke of the law.

² *I wish that they might even be cut off.]* ὀφελον και αποκοψονται. The apostle, ver. 10, had expressed his expectation that the false teacher should bear the merited punishment: he here speaks out and explains what that punishment is, viz. exclusion from the communion of the church. The construction of the original has divided the critics. Le Clerc contends that ὀφελον is never joined with a future tense, nor is the particle και ever interposed. He reads ὀφελον as if it were ωφειλον, and renders the clause, "they ought to be cut off, and they shall be cut off." See Cler. Annot. and Bowyer. Bengelius and others put ὀφελον by itself, and read the preceding clause with an interrogation: "Is, then, the scandal of the cross taken away? I wish it were. And they shall be cut off that trouble you."

"ὀφελον, proprie aoristus secundus est verbi ὀφειλω, debeo: sed sumitur etiam adverbialiter et denotat utinam: et est adverbium optandi quod construitur mox cum indicativo, (qui tamen non ab ὀφελον pendere videtur, sed a subintellec[t]a particula ει, vel ειθε, quæ cum ὀφελον sæpe conjuncta reperitur: Vide Alex. Job. xiv. 13, et xxx. 24,) mox cum optativo. 1 Cor. iv. 8; 2 Cor. xi. 1; Gal. v. 12. Αποκοπτω, ambiguitate quadam laborat locus Gal. v. 12, ubi de doctoribus judaizantibus inter primos Christianos sermo est, et Paulus optat ὀφελον κ. τ. λ. h. e. e vulgari opinione, ut seipsos sejungerent a cætu Christianorum doctores cætum Christianorum turbantes: quæ explicatio nec ab usu loquendi abhorret, nec a contexta oratione aliena est. Nec tamen plane improbanda est sententia, Chrysostomi, Theodoret, Theophylacti, et Augustini, quam inter recentiores maximè Grotius et Raphelius amplexi sunt, ex qua locus ita reddendus est: Per me, si velint, non modo circumcidant se, sed adeo genitalia sibi exsecant. Qui quidem sensus melius et contextui ipsi, et linguæ Græcæ consentire, affectui adeo Pauli contra doctores judaizantes, convenire videtur. Hesych. αποκοπος, ευνεχος." Schleusner. "I wish that they who are unsettling you may lament it." Wakefield. "even cut off, by the judgement of God, he inflicting diseases to the destruction of the body and the salvation of the soul. 1 Cor. v. 5. For the Greek, see Bowyer 4to, where Kuster *De Verbo Medio* is quoted, to show that the future of the middle voice signifies passively. St. Paul uses ὀφελον with an indicative mood, 1 Cor. iv. 8, and 2 Cor. xi. 1." Newcome. "I wish that they may be cut off (from communion, see ver. 10, note,) who trouble you about this matter: and they shall be cut off." Locke. I am unwilling to suppose that the apostle could wish his opponents any bodily harm; I cannot doubt, therefore, that Mr. Locke gives his true meaning,

and inculcate, that the converted Gentile is exempted from the yoke of the law. But if I insisted on their submission to the Mosaic ritual, the chief cause of offence would be removed, and the zealots for the law would be in a degree reconciled to the progress of the gospel. Let the inventors and propagators of these injurious calumnies take the shame which they deserve; and let the disturbers of your peace be cut off from Christian communion. They ought to be excluded from the church, as the perverters of its doctrine and the bane of its peace: and they shall be excluded. Christianity herself disowns them, and the true disciples of Christ will hold no intercourse with them.

Ch. v.
Ver. 12.

PART THE THIRD.

THE APOSTLE, NOW PROCEEDING TO THE PRACTICAL PART OF THE EPISTLE, EARNESTLY DISSUADES THE GALATIANS FROM THOSE VICES WHICH WERE TOO PREVALENT BOTH AMONG JEWS AND HEATHENS; AND EXHORTS THEM TO LIVE IN THE HABITUAL AND UNIFORM PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUE, AS THE ONLY MEANS OF ESCAPING FUTURE CONDEMNATION, AND OF SECURING THE BLESSINGS PROMISED BY THE GOSPEL. Gal. v. 13—vi. 10.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE recommends mutual affection, and contrasts the spirit of Judaism and heathenism with the spirit of Christianity. Ch. v. 13—26.

1. Christians, though at liberty from ceremonial restraints, ought to regard themselves as bound to each other by the ties of mutual sympathy and affection, ver. 13—15.

For ye, brethren³, have been invited to liberty. Only abuse not liberty as an occasion to the flesh⁴, but in love be servants⁵ one to another.

13.

³ *For ye, brethren.*] “I wish they were cut off; for, brethren, such are enslavers of you who have been called,” &c. Newcome. *Ye have been invited:* i. e. by me who received my commission for this purpose from Christ himself. See ver. 8, and ch. i. 6.

⁴ *An occasion to the flesh.*] The words *flesh* and *spirit* have various significations in the apostle's writings; and that they are sometimes used in the sense of the tendencies to vice or to

Ch. V.
Ver. 13.

You will consult your own advantage and the peace of the church, if you exclude from communion with you those who would enslave you to the yoke of the law. For indeed, my brethren, you were invited by me, who derived my authority for this purpose from Christ himself, into a state of absolute freedom from the yoke of ceremonies: emancipated from heathen idolatry, you were and are under no obligation to submit to Jewish rites. Yet let me caution you not to mistake the nature of that freedom which you enjoy. You are not released from the moral law. You are not at liberty to indulge those licentious passions which heathenism encourages, nor to cherish that contracted and malignant spirit which distinguishes the pharisaic Jews. You are still subject to the law of love, and you are bound by the generous spirit of Christianity to exert yourselves to the utmost extent of your powers to promote the happiness of all around you, as if you were actually in bonds of servitude to each other.

14. *For the whole law is fulfilled in one precept, even in this, Thou shalt love*
15. *thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another', take heed that ye be not consumed by each other.*

In lieu of all ceremonial rites the Christian law prescribes one grand paramount maxim, that of doing good; of doing to others as you could reasonably desire that in an exchange of circumstances they would do to you. Observe this one precept, and be assured that you obey every law with which under the new dispensation you have any concern. But if, instead of loving,

virtue in man, in which sense they are understood by most interpreters in this passage, cannot be denied. It appears to me however most agreeable to the apostle's design, and to the scope of his argument, to understand the word *spirit* in this connexion as expressive of the gospel, and of the state into which men were brought in consequence of their conversion to the Christian religion; and the word *flesh*, in opposition to *spirit*, as expressive of an unconverted state, whether of heathenism or Judaism, including under the latter pharisaism, or a superstitious attachment to traditionary rites. See ch. iii. 3. The tendency of both these states was to deprave the character, that of heathenism by vicious indulgence, and of Judaism by pride or despair. This idea he pursues at large, Rom. vi. vii. The vices thus generated he calls the works of the flesh, whether they consisted in intemperate pleasure, or in unreasonable affections of the mind; and this consideration easily explains what some expositors have regarded as a difficulty, namely, how it comes to pass that hatred, envy, contention, and heresy, are enumerated amongst the works of the flesh. See Chandler. In this sense liberty might be said to be abused as an occasion to the flesh, if, by conceiving themselves at liberty from moral restraint, they allowed themselves in the vicious habits and practices of their unconverted state.

⁵ *Be servants.*] *δουλεύετε* "though by the gospel they are called to a state of liberty from the law, they were still as much bound, and subjected to their brethren in all the offices and duties of love and good will, as if in that respect they were their vassals and bondmen." Locke.

¹ *Bite and devour one another.*] "The words are used metaphorically (as they are by the best authors), to signify the contention, slander, backbiting and censuring, which arose from the differences between the Jewish and Gentile converts. Such a conduct was not only contrary to the Christian spirit and character, but the most likely method to prejudice themselves, and to destroy the church of Christ among them." Chandler.

you hate one another, and, like wild beasts, snarl at and bite and worry each other, there is great reason to fear that you will be accessory to each others ruin; and be assured that no zeal for legal impositions, no superstitious adherence to burdensome institutions, will compensate for a temper and conduct so opposite to the spirit of the gospel.

Ch. v.
Ver. 15.

2. The apostle strongly urges the Galatians to adhere firmly to the doctrine and spirit of the gospel, in opposition to the principles and practices of an unchristianized state, and assures them that by so doing they will be perfectly safe from condemnation, ver. 16—18.

Now I say, Walk by the spirit, and by no means fulfill² the desire of the flesh³.

16.

I strictly charge you to act up to the precepts and to the spirit of the gospel, and carefully abstain from the vices of unbelievers, whether Jews or heathen.

For the flesh hath desires contrary to the spirit, and the spirit contrary to the flesh; and these oppose each other, so that ye do not the things that ye would⁴.

17.

The tendency of your former state of heathen idolatry, as well as of that state of bondage to pharisaic Judaism, into which your false teachers are now desirous to seduce you, is to betray you into gross and fatal immoralities; while that of the gospel is to inspire you with the love of purity and goodness. These states are therefore inconsistent with each other: so that, if you submit to Judaism in the expectation of attaining greater eminence in virtue, you will be miserably disappointed, and the severity of the law will first drive you to despair, and then plunge you into vice and ruin.

² *By no means fulfill.*] *ο μη τελεσητε*, to be understood imperatively, not as in the common translation, *ye shall not fulfill*. See Locke, Wakefield, Newcome, &c. *ο μη*, a double negative: *q. d. by no means, on no account whatsoever*.

³ *Spirit—flesh.*] “Flesh in the gospel language is that principle which inclines and carries men to ill. Spirit is that principle which dictates what is right, and inclines to good. See Rom. vii. 17, &c.” Locke.—“By the spirit the apostle means the reasonable principle or soul in every man, which God has given us to correct and govern the motions and tendencies of our fleshly appetites and passions. The flesh, the contrary principle in man, enticing men to such actions as their reason and conscience condemn.” Chandler. Notwithstanding these great authorities, I am inclined to believe that the apostle by *spirit* means the state of believers under the gospel dispensation; and by *flesh*, the state in which they were antecedent to conversion, whether of heathenism or Judaism. See ver. 13, note.

⁴ *Ye do not the things that ye would.*] Mr. Locke observes, that ours is the only translation which renders it *cannot*: *q. d.* You imagine that by submitting to the yoke of the law you will attain greater pre-eminence in virtue. In this you will be disappointed; for the spirit of the law will counteract that of the gospel. Locke, Chandler, Newcome, &c. understand the text as parallel to Rom. vii. 19. *q. d.* often ye do not practise what your mind approves.

Ch. V.
Ver. 18.

*But if ye be led by the spirit*¹, *ye are not under the law.*

If you are governed by the principles and the spirit of the gospel, you are no longer subject to the condemning sentence of the law, and the hope of mercy will be a continual motive to filial and cheerful obedience.

3. The apostle exposes and condemns the vices which were allowed and practised by the unchristianized world, ver. 19—21.

19. *Now the works of the flesh are evident. They are adultery*², *fornication,*
*impurity, lasciviousness, idolatry*³, *sorcery*⁴, *enmities, strifes, emulations,*
20, 21. *animosities, quarrels, party divisions*⁵, *separations*⁶, *envyings, murders,*
*drunkenness, revellings*⁷, *and such-like; concerning which I now forewarn*
you, as indeed I have told you before, that they who practise such things
will not inherit the kingdom of God.

You well know, my brethren, the vices which are openly practised by the unchristianized and unconverted world; who are strangers to the sublime principles and to the salutary restraints of the gospel. They allow themselves in the most licentious practices. They degrade themselves by the most stupid and contemptible idolatries. They pretend to curious arts, and the skill

¹ *If ye be led by the spirit:*] i. e. says Locke, “if you give yourselves up to the conduct of the gospel.” He observes in the note, “that it was natural for the apostle, having more than once mentioned the spirit, to continue the same word, though somewhat varied in the sense;” and he proceeds to show that the law and gospel are opposed by the apostle under the titles of flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8; Rom. vii. 5; Gal. iii. 3. But though it cannot be denied that the apostle does sometimes take up his words in a sense different from that in which he had used them before, yet it ought always to be presumed that he continues to use his words in the same sense, except where the contrary is evident; which does not appear to be the case in this context. And therefore, as it is clear that the word spirit is here used for the gospel, it ought to be taken in the same sense throughout the whole paragraph; and flesh, which is put in opposition to it, must signify the unchristianized state, whether Jewish or heathen.

² *Adultery.*] *μοιχεία* is wanting in the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, and in most of the ancient versions. See Griesbach.

³ *Idolatry.*] “with its impure attendant rites. See 1 Pet. iv. 3.” Newcome.

⁴ *Sorcery.*] *φαρμακεία* the word signifies *poisonings*, or incantations and magic arts by means of *poisonous drugs* and ointments with which impostors were accustomed to delude the credulous and superstitious. See Chandler and Macknight.

⁵ *Party-divisions.*] *διχοστασίαι* *schisms*, which do not proceed to separation. See Doddridge and Chandler.

⁶ *Separations.*] *αἵρεσεις*. Literally, *heresies*. The apostle’s meaning seems to be separations, and the dissolution of societies in consequence of quarrels and factions. There is no reference to theological disputes, or to heresies in the ecclesiastical sense of the word; for the apostle is detailing the vices of the unchristianized world. Dr. Chandler has introduced here a long and judicious note upon the meaning of the word heresy as used in scripture; but, for the reason above assigned, it is irrelevant to the occasion and the subject.

⁷ *Revellings.*] *κῶμοι* “were, amongst the Greeks, disorderly spending of the night in feasting, with a licentious indulging to wine, music, dancing, &c.” Locke. See Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 3.

which they possess they employ to the most pernicious purposes. They disturb the peace of society by their mutual jealousies, animosities, contentions, and divisions. They carry their hatred and malice to such an extent, that they often hesitate not to take away the life of the unfortunate object of their envy, malignity, and revenge. Drunkenness, gluttony, and every species of riot is common amongst them. With regard to such characters, I now declare, as I formerly assured you while I exercised my ministry among you, that, let them make what pretensions they will of strict conformity to ceremonial institutions, they are not, and while they continue in these practices they never can be, the genuine children of God, and heirs of the privileges of his kingdom. Ceremonial institutions, however rigorous, however regular, will never be accepted as a substitute for moral duties.

Ch. V.
Ver. 21.

4. The apostle represents the opposite tendency of the principles and of the spirit of the gospel, ver. 22, 23.

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance: against such things⁸ there is no law.

22.

23.

The principles of the gospel, when thoroughly understood, and carried into practical effect, will produce love to God and benevolence to man, habitual cheerfulness of mind, an earnest desire and endeavour to live in peace with all men, unwillingness to resent injuries received, a mild and gentle carriage in all the intercourses of society; habitual, active, disinterested benevolence; faithfulness in the performance of promises and the execution of trusts, and uniform integrity in all transactions of business; mildness in administering reproof, and resolute government of the appetites and passions. There can be no law to punish men who live in the practice of these virtues. And they who thus adorn their profession, need be under no anxiety lest they should incur the divine displeasure by declining to connect the rites of Judaism with the precepts of Christianity.

⁸ *Against such things.*] “Non admodum probandam reor quorundam anxiam diligentiam, quæ in hujusmodi catalogis solent et numero laborare, et in distinguendis singulis superstitiose torqueri: cum probabile sit Paulum congeriem quandam malorum et bonorum produxisse, quæ ferè consequi solent: non quod hæc sola sint, sed quod in his sit summa.” Erasmus. Hence, adds Dr. Newcome, after having made this quotation, “we may account for the addition of ἀγνεία in some manuscripts and versions, ver. 23; and perhaps for that of μοιχεία, ver. 19. Against such like dispositions and actions there is no prohibiting or condemning law; no stern law like that of Moses, 1 Tim. i. 9.” “Tales lege non damnantur. Est meiosis. Tantum abest, ut iis legis Mosaicæ, terrores sint metuendi, ut potius Deo sint grati, et accepti, licet non circumcisi.” Rosenmüller.

CH. V. 5. The disciples of Christ, having entered upon a new life, are bound to renounce the principles and vices of their former condition, ver. 24—26.

Ver. 24. *Now they who are Christ's¹ have crucified the flesh, with its passions and desires.*

What I have before said of myself, individually, may justly be applied to all who believe in Christ, and who profess to be his disciples. They, like him, have died and been raised to life again. Their former idolatrous or pharisaic selves are crucified; and all the evil principles, all the criminal habits and affections, all the gross prejudices and the vicious practices of their former state are condemned to death, never to appear again.

25, 26. *Seeing that we live by the spirit², let us also walk by the spirit. Let us not be vain-glorious³, provoking one another, envying one another.*

Crucified like Christ to our former state, like him we are also raised to a new life. This great change is produced in us by the spiritual dispensation of the gospel; by the profession of which we are introduced into a new state of existence at present, and raised to the hope of eternal life hereafter. But, since this privilege is the gift of the gospel, let our conduct be governed by the maxims and spirit of the gospel; and not by the principles of our former unregenerate and unholy state. Let our characters be adorned with Christian virtue. And particularly, let us cherish a humble, gentle, and disinterested spirit; let us entertain a just sense of our own imperfections, not thinking too highly of our own attainments, nor too meanly and contemptuously of those of others. But while, in our respective spheres of service, we are faithful and diligent in the performance of our own duty, let us not repine, but rejoice, if any of our fellow-labourers are honoured with superior talents, and crowned with more abundant success.

¹ *Who are Christ's.*] “who belong to Christ, and are his members.” Locke. The apostle seems to allude to ch. ii. 20. It is a familiar comparison with the apostle. The believer, in his converted state, resembles a person in a former state of existence; by conversion he becomes crucified to it; by the gospel he is raised, like Christ, to a new life; and he is, therefore, bound to regulate his conduct by the laws of his new state of existence. See this thought pursued at large, Rom. vii. A strong presumption that these epistles had the same author.

² *We live by the spirit.*] The gospel introduces us into a new life; it raises us from the dead; it behoves us, therefore, to adhere to it as a rule of life. “As Christians, as new men, we live by that spirit which raises us from the death of sin.” Newcome. Observe throughout, the word ‘spirit’ is used to signify the gospel dispensation. This shows the true meaning of the word ‘flesh,’ which is used in opposition to it.

³ *Vain-glorious.*] “like your ambitious leader.” Newcome. “nor provoke one another by insolent boasts of our Christian liberty, or by censuring others for the use of it; nor envy one another on account of any superior advantages and abilities with which the providence of God may have favoured us.” Chandler. “Whether the vain-glory and envying here were about their spiritual gifts, a fault which the Corinthians were guilty of, or upon any other occasion, I shall not curiously examine.” Locke.

SECTION II.

THE APOSTLE recommends gentleness in reproof; humility, liberality to Christian instructors, and perseverance in doing good. Ch. vi. 1—10. Ch. VI.

1. The apostle recommends prudence and gentleness in administering reproof; sympathy, humility, and self-examination, ver. 1—5.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken⁴ by any fault, do ye who are spiritual⁵, restore⁶ such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself⁷, lest thou also be tempted⁸. Ver. 1.

My Christian brethren, instead of envying the superior attainments of others; instead of tempting each other to what is wrong; instead of enjoying an ungenerous triumph if a person, supposed to be eminent for prudence and piety, should disgrace his character by unbecoming conduct; our profession inculcates, and it behoves us to exercise, a very different spirit. If, indeed, it should ever happen, as, from human frailty, it undoubtedly may, that a person professing Christianity, through the influence of former habits, or by sudden temptation, should be surprised into sin, let those who are eminent for gifts and virtues, and for their rank and station in the church, take the

⁴ *If a man be overtaken.*] *q. d.* if a man be carried away before he is aware. *εαν και προληφθη* “if a man by frailty or surprise fall into a fault.” Locke. “It expresses surprise by which a person might be drawn into sin without any deliberate design.” Chandler. “if a man be even discovered in any offence.” Newcome. “*Si quis invitus et improvise abreptus fuerit vitio quodam. Vide Elsner et Kypke. Sed vertunt alii interpretes sic: etiamsi quis deliquisse deprehendatur.*” Schleusner. This latter sense is adopted by Grotius. Griesbach joins the last verse of the preceding chapter to this: *q. d.* Let us not insult over each other’s frailties and offences, but rather endeavour to rectify what is amiss in ourselves and others.

⁵ *Ye who are spiritual.*] *πνευματικοι.* “who are eminent in the church for knowledge, practice, and gifts. 1 Cor. iii. 1, xii. 1.” Locke; which is the general opinion of the expositors. I am rather inclined, with Dr. Whitby, to understand it as principally referring to those who were instructors of the church, and who were qualified for this office by spiritual gifts. Dr. Chandler interprets, “you, in whom reason and religion are stronger principles, &c. A spiritual man in the New Testament, is either one who is endued with the gifts of the spirit, or one who is spiritually-minded.”

⁶ *Restore such an one.*] *καταρτιζετε.* “*restituo rem in suum locum aut statum, restauro quod ruptum et dissolutum est.*” Schleusner. To set a limb that is out of joint. “It properly signifies to reduce and recover every thing to its original state of perfection.” Chandler. See 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

⁷ *Considering thyself.*] Jerome and Le Clerc note this change of person as a solecism. Blackwall and Doddridge remark it as a beauty. See Erasmus *in loc.*

⁸ *Be tempted.*] *πειρασθης.* “be overtaken.” Wakefield; who argues that it signifies the same as *ληφθης*.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 1.

case in hand ; and let them endeavour to bring the offender to penitence and reformation. Let not the disjointed limb be roughly handled, or, immediately cut off ; but rather, by patience and prudence, let it be gently restored to its place, where it may again, in due time, become ornamental and useful to the body. For consider, my friends, that the very best men are frail ; and none can say how soon his own virtue may be exposed to a severe trial. Let him, then, conduct himself to an offending brother in the same manner in which, in similar circumstances, he should himself think it right to be treated by others.

2. *Bear ye one another's burdens¹, and thus ye will fulfill the law of Christ².*

In the progress of life, and in the profession of the Christian faith, we all have our trials ; and often to the full extent of our ability to bear them : every one knows his own burden, and finds it heavy enough : we need not to have it increased by any unnecessary addition to the load. And yet, my brethren, such is the strange propensity of some among you, that they are eager to impose upon you the burden of the law of Moses, encumbered with their own pharisaic rites, the burden of its impositions, and the burden of its curse ; a weight which is sufficient to press you down to the pit of destruction. But the gospel which you profess breathes a very different spirit. Bear one another's burdens, and do not add to them. Sympathize in each other's sufferings ; comfort one another under trouble ; relieve distress where it is in your power, and encourage the feeble-minded. These, my brethren, are the requisitions of the mild dispensation under which you live. If you comply with them, if you obey this easy, this reasonable, this lovely rule of life, you manifest your allegiance to Christ, and fully approve yourselves the faithful subjects of his heavenly kingdom, entitled to all the privileges and immunities of his auspicious reign.

3. *For, if any man³ conceiteth that he is something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

¹ *Bear one another's burdens.*] “ Bear with one another's infirmities. 1 Thess. v. 14 ; Rom. xv. 1.” Locke, Newcome.

² *Ye will fulfill, &c.*] *ἀναπληρώσετε*, in the future tense, is the reading of most of the ancient versions, and is adopted by Mr. Wakefield. “ As some were so very zealous for the law of Moses, St. Paul here puts them in mind of a law which they were under, and obliged to observe, the law of Christ. And he shows them how to do it, viz. by bearing one another's burdens, and not by increasing their burdens by the observances of the Levitical law.” Locke.

³ *If any man.*] There seems to be an evident allusion to the judaizing teacher, though the proposition is expressed generally. Indeed, Mr. Wakefield's translation fixes it directly upon

Let me add, that if there should happen to be any person among you, my brethren, who, despising the pure and simple precepts of Jesus, should think highly of himself, because of his attachment to the ritual law; should exhibit himself as a model of imitation, and as a standard of truth; and should be loud in his censures of those who do not yield implicit deference to his authority; and if, after all, it should appear upon examination that such a person has no foundation upon which to build his presumptuous claims, let that man know that he will find himself, in the issue, most egregiously deceived, and that his folly and his vanity will terminate in his own disgrace.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 3.

But let every man try⁴ his own work, and then he will have reason to glory on his own account, and not on that of another⁵. For every man must bear his own burden⁶.

4.

5.

Instead of meddling with and censuring others, let every man examine himself, let him inquire seriously and impartially into his own character and conduct; let him consider how they correspond with the spirit of the gospel; let him reform what is amiss, and improve what is imperfect. By these means he will acquire true satisfaction and peace of mind, and will have reason to rejoice on his own account, in his own character and hopes; nor will he then be inclined to boast of a fancied superiority to his brethren, and much less in his attempts to bring them over to his own opinion and party, and to subject them to the tyranny of the law. For all this will be of little avail in the great day when men will be judged according to their works, and to their real character, and not according to the estimation in which

him: "Now if a certain person think himself to be something, he deceiveth his own heart, for he is nothing."

⁴ *Try.*] "By the test of the evangelical law; and then he will have matter of glorying in his personal obedience, and not in causing others to judaize." Newcome.

⁵ *Not on that of another.*] "See ver. 13; the apostle in both places means the same thing; viz. glorying in another, in having brought him to circumcision, and other ritual observances of the Mosaic law." Locke. Wakefield reads ἐταίρον, "then he will keep his boasting to himself, and not boast against his neighbour."

⁶ *His own burden.*] i. e. of his own faults. See ver. 2. "Thus," says Mr. Locke, "St. Paul seems to me to discourse in this section: Brethren, there be some among you that would bring others under the ritual observances of the Mosaic law, a yoke which was too heavy for us and our fathers to bear. They would do much better to ease the burdens of the weak; this is suitable to the law of Christ, which they are under, and which they ought strictly to obey. If they think that, because of their spiritual gifts, they have power to prescribe in such matters, I tell them that they have not, and that they deceive themselves. Let them rather take care of their own particular actions, that they be right, and such as they ought to be. This will give them matter of glorying in themselves, and not vainly in others, as they do when they prevail with them to be circumcised. For every man shall be answerable for his own actions. Let the reader judge (continues this admirable expositor) whether this does not seem to be St. Paul's view here, and suit with his way of writing."

Ch. VI.
Ver. 5.

they have been held by themselves or others. In that day, every one must be responsible for his own errors and offences; and they who have been severe in their censures of others will then need, but will seek in vain for, that mercy which they have so unrighteously withheld. Nor will their professed subjection to the law of Moses, nor all their zeal in making proselytes, be of any avail.

2. The apostle urges the Galatians to make a competent provision for the teachers of religion, and to persevere in the practice of virtue and benevolence, ver. 6—10.

6. *Now let him who is instructed in the word, communicate in all good things¹ to him that instructeth.*

Let those who are taught the important truths of the Christian revelation be liberal to their pious and faithful instructors; and cheerfully contribute what may be necessary for their support and comfort. It is but reasonable that they should have a suitable compensation for their time and labour; and it is the appointment of Christ that the teachers of his religion should be maintained by those who derive benefit from their instruction.

7. *Be not deceived²: God is not deluded; for whatsoever a man soweth, that he will also reap.*

Do not excuse yourselves by frivolous pretences from the discharge of this duty. It is required by God. And though the persons who are immediately aggrieved may not be able either to reply to your sophistry, or to redress their own wrongs, God is the impartial judge between you and them. None of your vain pretences can impose upon him; nor will it be possible for you to elude his retributive justice. Proportioned to your seed-time will

¹ *Communicate in all good things.*] “make the teacher thereof a partaker in all his good things.” Wakefield. “The exhortation,” says Dr. Chandler, “is founded upon this rule of equity and gratitude, that benefits conferred deserve suitable returns.” He adds, that “we may observe that the maintenance of the preachers of the gospel was, in the primitive church, by the voluntary contributions of the Christian people; and that the divine right of tythes was a doctrine much later than the times of the apostles.” See Phil. iv. 15; 1 Cor. ix. 11. “If this was their duty,” says Dr. Whitby, “towards such teachers as had no need of books or study to fit themselves for the work, they being enabled for it by immediate assistance and gifts of the Holy Ghost; how much more towards them who spend much time and money to fit themselves for that work, and must be still employed in studying and reading to make themselves such workmen as need not to be ashamed!”

² *Be not deceived, &c.*] “The apostle here, with great propriety and force, exposes the evasions some would make use of to excuse themselves from acts of liberality; by which, however they might impose upon others, they would egregiously deceive themselves, as every circumstance lies open to an all-seeing God, and they assuredly should reap according as they sowed; a metaphor which he employs elsewhere to excite liberality, 2 Cor. ix. 6.” Doddridge.

be your future harvest. To the bountiful and kind, bounty and kindness shall be abundantly exercised; but to the penurious and the niggardly, the recompense will be correspondent to their deeds. Ch. VI.
Ver. 7.

For he who soweth on the flesh³, from the flesh will reap destruction; but he who soweth on the spirit, will from the spirit reap everlasting life⁴. 8.

The produce will naturally partake of the qualities of the soil upon which it grows. A bad soil will corrupt the good seed, which a rich and fertile soil would invigorate and cherish. He who professes the Christian religion, while he is in his heart a heathen, will naturally practise those vices of a heathen state which will terminate in ruin. But he whose heart is upright and pure, and whose profession is sincere, will abound in those fruits of virtue and piety, and in those acts of liberality and beneficence, which are the surest pledge of everlasting happiness.

And let us not grow weary of doing well, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 9.

Let us then faithfully and resolutely persevere in the practice of duty, though it may sometimes require great labour, and patience, and self-denial; though we derive no immediate advantage from it; and though our spirits are at times depressed and discouraged at the little good which we appear to do. If we hold out to the end, we shall succeed. We are scattering the good seed upon a soil apparently rough and barren. But in due time it will take root and spring up, and reward our anxiety and toil with an abundant harvest. The labourer at least shall not lose his own reward. But in order to this, it is necessary that we should not relax in our virtuous exertions, much less fold our hands, and sit down in despair.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men⁵, but especially to those who are of the household of faith. 10.

³ *He who soweth on the flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction.*] So Mr. Wakefield. The flesh and the spirit are the soil upon which the seed is sown, and corresponding to the soil will be the produce. A bad soil will corrupt the best seed, and destroy the most vigorous plant. A good soil will nourish and invigorate the seed, and produce an abundant crop. The *flesh*, agreeably to the sense in which the word has been before used, is the heathen, unchristianized state, the produce of which is weeds and unwholesome plants. He that soweth on the flesh is the man who professes faith in the Christian religion, but whose heart is unconverted; the fruit which he will bear will be putrid and worthless. He that soweth on the spirit is the cordial and practical believer in the gospel; who bringeth forth fruit to holiness, the end of which is everlasting life. To sow upon the spirit is to receive the truths of the Christian religion in a good heart.

⁴ *Everlasting life.*] “The apostle makes use of the terms *corruption* and *life*, in correspondence to the nature of those principles of *flesh* and *spirit*; the flesh being liable to corruption, and spirit or breath being the principle of life.” Priestley.

⁵ *Do good to all men.*] “How generous the spirit which Christianity inspires! None that

Ch. VI.
Ver. 10.

To conclude: Let us ever cultivate a benevolent, disinterested, and liberal spirit. Let our good wishes extend to all mankind; and, as far as opportunity offers, let us contribute to the happiness of all, without distinction, and without excluding those who may differ most widely from us in principles and profession: no, nor yet our enemies and persecutors, if it should be in our power to help them. But as the exercise of benevolence is necessarily restricted, let us be most kind to those with whom we are most intimately connected, and who may be most benefited by our exertions; particularly to our fellow-Christians, who are brethren of the same family, heirs of the same glorious hopes, and who are exposed to the same difficulties, trials, and dangers, with ourselves; who are therefore entitled to a peculiar share in our sympathy and affection, and to whom our good offices may often prove of essential service.

CONCLUSION.

THE APOSTLE closes his epistle with a severe animadversion upon the Judaizing teachers, with a solemn declaration of the liberty of Gentile Christians, with an earnest profession of his own sincerity, and with the apostolical benediction. Ch. vi. 11—18.

1. He calls their attention to the circumstance of his having written the whole letter himself, ver. 11.

11. *See in what large characters¹ I have written to you with my own hand.*

As I have been greatly calumniated by my opponents, and charged with duplicity of conduct, it might possibly be alleged, if I had employed an

need our assistance are to be excluded from it, when it is in our power to give it. And yet how wise and just is the limitation here fixed by the apostle! Nature teaches men to provide in the first place for their household and family; and reason instructs them to regard the most worthy objects of charity in their first and largest distributions. And both these reasons concur to direct the Christian to do good, especially to the household of faith." Chandler.

¹ *In what large characters.*] *πηλικοῖς γραμμασι* this expression is usually understood of the length of the letter; but Dr. Whitby observes, that St. Paul uses the word *ἐπιστολαί* seventeen times, but never the word *γραμματά*, when he speaks of his epistles; also that the Greek scholiast conceives that the expression refers to the largeness and inelegancy of the characters in which it was written. The apostle probably chose to write this whole epistle himself, to give testimony under his own hand and seal to the importance of his doctrine and the consistency of his character; and to preclude the possibility of the pretext that the letter was forged. He probably wrote the Greek characters ill and with difficulty, which might be the reason why he commonly employed an amanuensis. See Doddridge.

amanuensis as usual, that my signature was forged, or that the letter did not express my real sentiments. To preclude every objection of this kind, I have written the whole epistle myself, that my own hand-writing may bear testimony to the doctrine which I teach. And that it is my hand-writing you may easily perceive from the large and ill-shaped characters in which the letter is written, which discover the writer to be one not much used to writing Greek.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 11.

2. The apostle directly charges the judaizing teachers with acting from sinister and selfish motives, ver. 12, 13.

All those² who are desirous of making a specious appearance³ in the flesh, would constrain you to be circumcised, only that they may not be persecuted⁴ for the cross of Christ. For they who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law⁵, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh⁶.

12.

13.

When these zealots urge you to submit to the yoke of the Mosaic institute, they profess great zeal for your interest, and pretend that obedience to the ceremonial law will be of the greatest advantage to you. But the truth is, they are only pursuing their own selfish purposes. They desire to pass themselves off as Jews, and so to escape persecution; as the Jewish religion is tolerated through the Roman empire. They wish, therefore, to conciliate the minds of the Jews by representing you to them as proselytes to their law, whereas they are themselves convinced that the law is of no use; and while they are persuading, and even compelling you, by their imperious lan-

² *All those.*] ὅσοι, "as many as."

³ *A specious appearance.*] εὐπροσώπησαι "the word properly signifies, to be handsome and lovely: hence it is used to signify any thing that recommends itself by its specious appearance. This was the case of these judaizing teachers: they made it their study to keep fair with the Jews ἐν σαρκί, by means of the flesh; not only by boasting of their own circumcision, but that they had pressed the necessity of circumcision upon others." Chandler. ἐν σαρκί, "in the ritual observances of the law; which, Heb. ix. 10, are called δυνάμεινα σαρκός." Locke.

⁴ *That they may not be persecuted.*] Dr. Whitby observes from Jerom, "that Augustus, Tiberius, and Caius Cæsar, had made laws that the Jews dispersed through the whole Roman empire should live according to their own laws and ceremonies: whosoever, therefore, was circumcised, though he believed in Christ, was by the Gentiles deemed a Jew; but they who had not this token were persecuted both by Jews and Gentiles."

⁵ *Neither do they keep the law.*] "For how, saith Theodoret, could they in Galatia regularly observe the Jewish feasts, or offer sacrifice, or cleanse themselves from their defilements by touching any thing that was unclean?" Whitby. But the apostle no doubt means to insinuate, that those zealots who bound the yoke of the law upon others were themselves very negligent in observing its precepts. See Matt. xxiii. 4, 5.

⁶ *May glory in your flesh.*] "might boast of this among the Jews, that they promoted circumcision even among the Gentiles, and by that pretence might avoid persecution." Whitby.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 13.

guage, to conform rigidly to it as a matter of indispensable obligation, they themselves make no scruple of violating the Mosaic precepts, and they screen themselves from censure by boasting of their zeal and their success in your conversion to Judaism.

3. The apostle boasts in emancipation from the Jewish law by the death of Christ; and declares that a practical faith in the gospel is of itself quite sufficient to entitle a believer to mercy and peace, ver. 14—16.

14. *But far be it that I should glory¹ except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world².*

May I never boast of that in which these hypocrites place their glory, in making proselytes to the Jewish ritual. Nor, indeed, may I ever value myself upon any thing else but upon being a faithful and unwearied preacher of the true doctrine of my master Jesus, the illustrious person in whom all the purposes of the law were fulfilled, and by whose public death upon the cross a new dispensation is introduced and ratified, and the former covenant is so completely superseded and abolished, that it may be considered by all converts to Christianity as absolutely dead; and believers in Jesus, even those who were formerly Jews, may be regarded as persons who are in a sense dead to their former connexions and obligations, and as having entered upon a new and better state of existence.

¹ *Far be it that I should glory, &c.*] *μη γεινοίτο*. See Newcome and Wakefield.—“glorying in the cross of Christ, is opposed to the judaizers' glorying in circumcision: it is glorying in the plain unmixed doctrine of justification by a crucified saviour.” Chandler.

² *The world is crucified, &c.*] “by means of which doctrine the world was of no more account to him, he valued the applauses of men, and the riches and pleasures of the world, no more than a dead body hanging upon a cross; and by means of which he was crucified to the world, of no more esteem with worldly men than that loathsome and wretched spectacle.” Chandler.—“I view the world as little impressed by all its charms, as a spectator would be by any thing which had been graceful in the countenance of a crucified person, when he beholds it blackened in the agonies of death; and am no more affected by the objects around me, than one that is expiring would be struck with any of those prospects which his dying eyes might view from the cross on which he was suspended.” Doddridge. Mr. Locke, Archbishop Newcome, and most other expositors, understand the words in a similar sense. With deference, however, to these great authorities, I am inclined to agree with those critics who understand *κοσμος* in this connexion to signify the Jewish dispensation, as it unquestionably does Gal. iv. 3, and Col. ii. 8, 20.—“*Nulla amplius Judæorum et religionis Mosaicæ mecum est conjunctio.*” Schleusner.—“*Propter Christum, inquit, illa judaica vanitas, cum suis commodis, mihi crucifixa est, non me movet vel allicit; repudio eam.*” Rosenmüller. But as it is certain that the apostle was not released, and did not regard himself as personally released, from his subjection to the ceremonial law, it seems most reasonable to understand him as speaking in the name and under the character of a converted Gentile. In the same lax sense he uses the first person singular in Rom. vii. See Locke's preface, p. vi. Still, however, though to avoid giving offence the apostle submitted to the rites of the law, he was dead to all dependence upon it, or expectations from it.

For in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision any thing³ nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 15.

To say the truth, to those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, no rites or ceremonies are of any use. It matters little whether they were originally Jews or heathen; they are by faith born into this new world which God has created: In other words, they thus become members of the visible church; and being separated from the mass of the unbelieving world, they are entitled to the privileges of the professing people of God. It is not circumcision, it is a new creation, and a new life, which now entitles them to be registered as children of God.

And as many as shall walk according to this rule, peace and mercy will be upon them⁴, even upon the Israel of God.

16.

If they who are thus by faith introduced into a new and privileged state have wisdom to make a proper use of their privileges, and to govern their temper and conduct by the rules of their profession, and the precepts of Christ, they shall most assuredly obtain all the invaluable blessings which the gospel promises, forgiveness of sins, peace here, and happiness hereafter. For these persons, whether they were originally Jews or Gentiles, whether they use ceremonies or neglect them altogether, are the true Israel of God, the genuine offspring of Abraham, heirs of the promises, and the worthy objects of divine complacency and benevolence.

4. The apostle solemnly professes his own devotedness to the service of Christ, ver. 17.

Henceforth let no man give me trouble⁵, for I bear in my person the marks of the Lord Jesus⁶.

17.

For the future, let no one doubt of my attachment to the Christian doctrine and to the principles of Christian liberty: nor let any one presume to charge

³ *Is any thing.*] The best copies for *ισχυει*, *avaieth*, read *εστι*, *is*. See ch. v. 6. A "new creation" is the introduction into a new state of things by faith in Christ; by which believers, whether Jews or heathen, are brought into covenant with God. It is parallel to ch. v. 6, "faith which worketh by love." See 1 Cor. vii. 19; Eph. ii. 10.

⁴ *Will be upon them.*] "peace and mercy shall be upon them, they being that Israel which are truly the people of God." Locke. See also Chandler. "will be upon them." Wakefield. Newcome and others translate the words as expressing a kind wish: Peace *be* upon them.

⁵ *Let no man, &c.*] "by questioning my character and mission." Chandler.

⁶ *The marks, &c.*] "*σημα* properly signifies a mark that was imprinted on the hands of the soldiers when they were enlisted and had their names entered into the military roll: this mark was commonly the emperor's name. Thus our apostle had those marks imprinted upon him, either by his sufferings for Christ, or, through the number and greatness of the revelations he had received from him, as made it abundantly appear under what general he was enlisted." Chandler.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 17.

me with duplicity of conduct, and to add to my persecutions by calumniating my character. I carry in my person the marks of subjection to a master, and devotedness to a chief: not indeed to Moses and his law, but to Jesus, whom I am proud to acknowledge as my leader: and of my fidelity and attachment to him and to his cause, those numerous scars which I carry about with me, and which are the indelible effects of my sufferings for his sake, are ample and incontestable proofs.

5. The epistle closes with the apostolical benediction, ver. 18.

18. *The favour of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren¹. Amen.*

My Christian brethren, for as such I will still regard you, and by this endearing appellation will continue to address you; for, notwithstanding the freedom and even the severity of language which I may have used in the course of this epistle, I still entertain a kind affection for you: and as the best proof of my regard, I conclude, my dear brethren, with expressing my earnest wish that our common Master Jesus Christ may behold you with complacency, and that the invaluable blessings of his gospel in all their purity and freedom may long remain among you. Amen.

¹ *With your spirit.*] “that is, *with you*: in other epistles it is μεθ' ὑμῶν, 1 Cor. xvi. 23; or μετα πάντων ὑμῶν, Rom. xvi. 24; 2 Cor. xiii. 13; Phil. iv. 23.” Whitby. The postscript which affirms this epistle to have been written from Rome is not found in the Alexandrine, Ephrem, Clermont, or other of the most ancient and approved manuscripts, and is undoubtedly a mistake.

THE EPISTLE

OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE EPHESIANS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THE EPISTLE entitled TO THE EPHESIANS was written by the apostle Paul about the year 62, while he was a prisoner at Rome; and was sent at the same time with the epistles to the Colossians, and to Philemon, and by the same messengers, Tychicus and Onesimus: ch. vi. 21.¹

It is one of those epistles the genuineness of which was never disputed by the ancients, who were best qualified to decide upon the subject, and who took great pains to gain information. And the train of thought, the style of argumentation, the structure of the sentences, the peculiarity of phrase, and the allusions to facts, constitute a strong body of presumptive evidence that the epistle is justly ascribed to the apostle Paul as its author.

¹ "There is," says Dr. Priestley, "a peculiar dignity and sublimity in this epistle, as well as the strongest marks of the most earnest affection to those to whom he writes; and the same has been observed of all the epistles which he wrote from Rome. He probably knew that he was near the close of his life; of a long and laborious warfare, as it may be called, in the cause of Christianity, of the great value of which he was fully sensible: he therefore writes with that energy with which a man may be supposed to give his last admonitions to those he loves, respecting their most important interests."

Nevertheless, there is great reason to believe that this epistle was not addressed by the apostle to the church at Ephesus. In all the epistles which are inscribed to churches which Paul had himself planted, and where he had for some time resided, there are frequent allusions to the visit he had made to them, and to memorable events and circumstances which had occurred during his residence among them. This is evident in the epistles to the Thessalonians, the Galatians, the Philippians, and the Corinthians. But though the apostle had visited Ephesus twice at least (Acts xviii. 19, xix. 1); though, in his second visit, he had passed the greater part of three years amongst them (Acts xx. 31); though he had been exposed to great danger in that city, in consequence of the uproar excited by Demetrius (Acts xix. 30), to which, in other epistles, he is supposed to allude with great emphasis and feeling (1 Cor. xv. 32, 2 Cor. i. 8); and though he had taken so affectionate a farewell of the elders of Ephesus at Miletus in his last journey to Jerusalem (Acts xx. 17); yet of all this he takes no notice at all through the whole of the epistle, but writes in general terms, as if he were addressing believers who were almost, if not altogether, strangers to his person. It is observable that in one place (Eph. i. 15) he speaks of *his* having *heard* of *their* faith and love; and in another (ch. iii. 2) he makes the supposition that *they* had *heard* of *his* divine commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. No evidence could more decisively prove that he was not at that time addressing a body of Christians with whom he had been for years in the habits of familiar intercourse.

It is plain from a passage in the epistle to the Colossians (Col. iv. 16), that the apostle had written a letter to the church of Laodicea. It also appears from the same epistle (ch. ii. 1), that he had never visited that church in person. And as he requires that the epistle to the Colossians should be read to the Laodiceans, and that of the Laodiceans to the Colossians, it is highly probable that this is the epistle which was originally addressed to the Laodiceans. For the two epistles were written at the same time, were sent by the same messengers, they treat on the same subject, and were composed in the same style; so that they mutually illustrate each other, and serve as a useful commentary upon each other; and, indeed, one can hardly be understood without the other. And as the subject in both is discussed in a rhetorical declamatory style, it is very probable that the apostle might wish that both the letters might be read by the same persons, that so the subject might be the better understood. In all the manu-

scripts now extant the epistle is inscribed to the Ephesians; but some copies in possession of Basil, an ecclesiastical writer of the fourth century¹, wanted the word Ephesus, as if the transcriber had been uncertain to what church the epistle was addressed, or had considered it as intended for a general circular letter. And Marcion, a learned Christian in the second century, who was stigmatized as a heretic by those who assumed the title of orthodox, says that the epistle was inscribed to the Laodiceans; which is probably the fact².

To account for the early and prevailing error in the address of the epistle, it has been ingeniously, and not improbably, conjectured, that Tychicus, who was intrusted with the epistle, passing through Ephesus in his way to Laodicea, permitted the Ephesians to read and to take a copy of the epistle to the Laodiceans, leaving out the name of the city to which it was directed; and that other churches, transcribing from the copy at Ephesus, which was probably more known than that at Laodicea, erroneously apprehended that the epistle was originally addressed to the Ephesian church³.

The objections urged by the late learned and acute Edward Evanson

¹ Basil, speaking of this epistle, says, "and writing to the Ephesians as truly united to him through knowledge, he called them, in a peculiar sense, *such who are*, saying *τοῖς ἀγίοις τοῖς ἐσσι*, to the saints who are, and the faithful in Christ Jesus. For so those before us have transmitted it, and we have found it in ancient copies." Hence Mill and others have inferred that the words *ἐν Ἐφεσῶ* were wanting in Basil's copies; L'Enfant, Lardner, and others, deny this conclusion; but Paley, with his usual correctness of judgement, remarks, "that the passage must be considered as Basil's fanciful way of explaining what was really a corrupt and defective reading; for I do not believe it possible that the author of the epistle could have originally written *ἀγίοις τοῖς ἐσσι*, without any name of place to follow it."

From this omission, Archbishop Usher conjectures that this epistle might be intended as a circular epistle to any of the churches of the Lesser Asia, whose name might be occasionally inserted to fill up the blank. Usher. *Ann.* A.D. 64. See Doddridge's *Introduction*. Bengelius and Haenlein adopt Usher's hypothesis. See Rosenmuller, *Introd. ad Eph.*; who himself adheres to the common opinion, together with Locke, Whitby, Lardner, Chandler, Doddridge, Newcome, Macknight, Priestley, &c.

² Grotius argues, from the testimony of Marcion, that this epistle was inscribed to the Laodiceans; for, however erroneous his doctrine, or however faulty his character might be, his testimony was admissible to a fact which had no connexion with his errors. "*Marcio hanc epistolam vocat ad Laodicensēs, ex fide, ut credibile est, Ecclesiæ Laodicensis. Nam cur in ea re mentiretur nihil erat causæ.*" This he supposes to be the epistle to which Paul refers Col. iv. 16. Benson and Paley argue strongly in favour of the same hypothesis; also Mill, Vitranga, and Wetstein.

³ "Whoever (says Dr. Paley) inspects the map of Asia Minor will see that a person proceeding from Rome to Laodicea, would probably land at Ephesus, as the nearest frequented sea-port in that direction. Might not Tychicus then, in passing through Ephesus, communicate to the Christians of that place the letter with which he was charged? And might not copies of that letter be multiplied and preserved at Ephesus? Might not some of the copies drop the words of designation, *ἐν τῇ Λαοδικείᾳ*, which it was of no consequence to an Ephesian to retain? Might not copies of the letter come out into the Christian church at large from Ephesus? and might not this give occasion to the belief that the letter was written to that church?

lastly, might not this belief produce the error which we suppose to have crept into the inscription?" *Horæ Paulin. Ephes.* No. 4.

against the genuineness of this epistle are of great force, upon the supposition that the epistle was inscribed to the Ephesians, but are of no validity if the epistle was written to the church at Laodicea¹.

PAUL was the apostle of the Gentiles; and it was in the faithful discharge of this honourable mission that he had been attacked with savage fury by a Jewish mob, and, after having been confined for two years as a prisoner in Judea, had been sent to Rome, and had continued there in bonds two years longer. Of this subject his heart was full; and his main design in this epistle, and in that to the Colossians, is to express his gratitude to God for his great goodness in admitting Gentiles to equal privileges with Jews in the Christian community; and his admiration and delight, that he, who was once an ignorant, bigoted, persecuting pharisee, should be singled out as the apostle of this gracious dispensation. This is a circumstance which ought to be continually kept in view in reading the epistles that are dated from Rome, and particularly this to the Ephesians. To modern Christians it appears so natural and reasonable, that the benevolent parent of mankind should be impartial in his dispensations towards all his rational offspring, and they are so entirely unaccustomed to national distinctions and preferences, that they hardly know how to make sufficient allowance for those who were placed in different circumstances; and the rapturous language of the apostle upon this subject is apt to appear unnatural, affected, and insipid. This objection, however, will vanish, if the reader will keep in mind the history and character of the apostle, and the peculiar circumstances under which these epistles were written.

Born a Jew, educated a pharisee of the sternest *caste*, holding all the heathen of every rank, and even the Jewish *populace* themselves, in sovereign contempt, and execration, a hater of the Christian name, and a savage persecutor of the Christian faith, it might well be matter of astonishment and gratitude, that God, in his free and sovereign mercy, should have vouchsafed to step out of his usual course, to arrest such an one in his mad career, to humble him who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, and the very chief of sinners, at the feet of that Jesus whom he had insulted and persecuted, and to subdue him to the Christian faith, by the personal appearance of Christ to him for this purpose on the road to Damascus.

¹ See Evanson's *Dissonance*, ed. 2, p. 312. The learned writer denies that there is any evidence that this epistle was inscribed to the church at Laodicea. There is indeed no direct evidence, but the supposition is at least plausible.

But that one who had been so bitter an enemy, so malignant a persecutor, should not only be converted to the faith, but that he should be appointed a teacher of the Christian doctrine; that he should be invested with the authority and credentials of an apostle, in no respect inferior to the very chief of that venerable body; that he should be honoured with a special commission to the Gentiles; that it should be one principal object of this mission, to proclaim liberty to the Gentile believer, and to offer him all the privileges of the gospel, accompanied with entire exemption from the yoke of the law; and finally, that he at this very time should be a sufferer and a prisoner, for this reason only and for no other, because he had preached the gospel in this liberal form to the Gentiles: all these considerations rushing at once into the apostle's mind, overwhelmed him with astonishment, delight, and gratitude. He labours for language to express what his heart so intensely feels. And while he abounds in the loftiest expressions of admiration and thankfulness for the great mercy of God to the Gentile world, in inviting them to the privileges of the gospel, unshackled with the rigours of the law; and to himself in particular, in employing him as the missionary for this gracious purpose; he at the same time earnestly presses upon those to whom he writes, that they would firmly adhere to the pure uncorrupted doctrine which he had taught them; and urges them not to regard his own sufferings as any objection either to his mission or to his doctrine; for that these were so far from being to himself a cause of uneasiness and regret, or, a reproach to the cause which he espoused, that he accounted the chain he wore as his ornament and glory, as the sure pledge of a triumphant remuneration at the day of Christ's appearance; and even as a corroborative evidence of the authenticity of his mission.

If the reader, therefore, will take into consideration this peculiar state of the apostle's mind, the rapturous and glowing language of the epistles which are dated from Rome, far from being inflated and overstrained, will appear to be the natural and appropriate expressions of the apostle's ardent and energetic feelings.

And these considerations will account in a satisfactory manner for the manifest difference between the style of the epistles which were dictated at Rome by Paul the PRISONER, and the other letters of the same apostle. In the former he gives vent to his intense and exalted feelings in a sort of rhapsodical declamation, under a strong impression that he approached the termination of his arduous but glorious course; while in the latter, he usually

adopts the calmer language of reasoning and persuasion : not indeed without some occasional bursts of natural and strong eloquence. So that this diversity of style in epistles written under circumstances so very different, which to some has appeared in the light of an objection to the epistles sent from Rome, is in fact a presumptive argument in favour of their authenticity.

THIS EPISTLE, like the rest of those which the apostle indited, is partly *Doctrinal* and partly *Practical*. The *Doctrinal* part is contained in the first three chapters, and the *Practical* in the last three.—In the *Doctrinal* part, the apostle,

I. After the usual *Introduction*, expresses his gratitude to God for the *privileges* of which the Gentiles equally with the Jews are made to participate through Christ, in consequence of their eternal predestination to it by the pure infinite mercy of God. Ch. i. 1—14.

II. The apostle prays that his Christian friends may be duly sensible of that great *exertion of divine power* which was exhibited in elevating them to the hope of the gospel; a power analogous to that by which Christ was raised from the dead, and advanced to heaven; an exertion prompted by boundless, unmerited goodness; and the design of which was to raise them to a state of dignity, virtue, and happiness. Ch. i. 15—ii. 10.

III. In order to impress upon their hearts a just sense of the value of their privileges, the apostle reminds his Christian friends of the great *disadvantages of their former Gentile state*, from which they are delivered by the death of Christ, in consequence of which, they are now incorporated with the chosen people of God. Ch. ii. 11—22.

IV. The apostle, meaning to enter upon the practical part of the epistle, incidentally mentions his own situation as a *prisoner* for having preached the gospel to the Gentiles. And in order to obviate any discouragement which might arise from this circumstance, he introduces a digression, in which he reminds them of the revelation which had been made concerning the admission of the Gentiles into the new covenant; he dwells with rapture upon the great honour conferred upon himself as an apostle of this new and gracious dispensation; he hints at the powerful evidence which accompanied the preaching of the gospel; he exhorts them not to be disheartened at his sufferings in the cause, which were indeed a confirmation of his testimony; he prays for their establishment in the faith; and concludes this part of the epistle with a suitable doxology. Ch. iii. *throughout*.

Entering now upon the *Practical* part of the epistle, the apostle

1. Exhorts to the practice of various *personal* and *social* virtues. Ch. iv. 1—v. 21.
2. He insists upon the *relative* duties. Ch. iv. 22—v. 9.
3. He recommends resolute *opposition* to whatever would alienate their regards from the Christian faith. Ch. v. 10—20.
4. He concludes the epistle with a *salutation* and *benediction*. Ch. v. 21—24.

The language of this epistle is, as I have already observed, in many places highly figurative and rhetorical. It cannot be understood without much attention; but the true explanation of it will serve as a key to the solution of some obscure phrases, the misinterpretation of which has laid a foundation for many of those popular errors by which the Christian doctrine has been corrupted and debased.

I shall conclude with the words of Grotius: "*Paulus jam vetus in apostolico munere, et ob evangelium Romæ vinctus, ostendit quanta sit vis evangelii præ doctrinis omnibus: quomodo omnia Dei consilia ab omni ævo eo tetenderint; quam admiranda sit in eo Dei efficacia: rerum sublimitatem adæquans verbis sublimioribus, quam ulla unquam habuit lingua humana.*"

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

PART THE FIRST.

THE APOSTLE TREATS OF THE PRIVILEGES OF GENTILE CONVERTS, AND EN-
DEAVOURS TO IMPRESS UPON THE HEARTS OF HIS READERS A JUST SENSE
OF THEIR INESTIMABLE VALUE, AND OF THE OBLIGATION THEY ARE UN-
DER TO DIVINE MERCY. Ch. i.—iii. Ch. I.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE, after a suitable introduction, expresses his gratitude to God for his great goodness in the admission of Jews and Gentiles without distinction to the privileges of the Christian church. Ch. i. 1—14.

1. **T**HE apostle opens the epistle with a suitable Introduction and Salutation, ver. 1, 2.

PAUL, by the will of God¹ an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the saints² who are at Ephesus³, even the believers⁴ in Christ Jesus, favour be to you and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ⁵. Ver. 1. 2.

¹ *Paul, by the will of God.*] Dr. Chandler observes, that “the apostle asserts his divine mission and character at the beginning of his letter, that the doctrine he delivered in it might carry the greater authority and weight.”

² *Saints,*] that is, holy persons, separated by their profession of Christianity from the rest of mankind, like the Jews, without any respect to moral character. 1 Cor. i. 2; Rom. i. 2; Exod. xix. 6, &c. See Locke and Chandler.

³ *At Ephesus.*] This reading is supported by all the copies and versions now extant; though,

Ch. I.
Ver. 2.

This letter comes from Paul, who by the merciful interposition of God was converted to the Christian faith, and invested with the high and honourable commission of preaching the gospel of Jesus, and of being a chosen witness to his resurrection from the dead. And it is addressed to those persons at Ephesus and elsewhere, who by their public profession of Christianity have separated themselves from the unbelieving world, and especially to those who faithfully adhere to the purity and to the liberty of the gospel, without blending Jewish rites with Christian doctrine. And my first wish for you all is, that you may enjoy that peace which flows from a faithful profession of the gospel, which is the free gift of our heavenly Father, communicated to us by our honoured Master Jesus, whom we receive and acknowledge as the promised Messiah.

2. The apostle gives thanks to God for the conversion of the Gentiles to the Christian faith, ver. 3, 4.

3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us¹ with every spiritual blessing² in heavenly places³ in Christ⁴,*

for the reasons assigned in the Introduction, it is probably a mistake. Basil's manuscripts omitted the word, and Marcion read Laodicea. See Griesbach *in loc.*

¹ *Believers.*] *πιστοίς*, faithful. Mr. Locke observes that "this word is found in the introductions to the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, but to no other epistles of Paul; and he understands it of those "who stood firm to Christ: which he (the apostle) did not count them to do who made an observance of Jewish rites a requisite part of the Christian religion."

² *From God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.*] "You see," says Dr. Priestley, "how the apostle constantly distinguishes God from Christ. Indeed there is no passage in the New Testament in which Christ is so much as called God, though in an inferior sense. Could the apostle have foreseen how strangely the Christian doctrine would have been corrupted in this respect, he might have taken more effectual methods to prevent it: but considering that he had not, and without a particular revelation could not have had, the least suspicion of any such thing, nothing could be better calculated to guard against it than the manner in which he has uniformly expressed himself on this subject."

³ *Who hath blessed us.*] Mr. Locke has taken great pains, in a note upon this text, to show that by the expressions *we* and *us* in this chapter the apostle means converted Gentiles in general, with whom St. Paul frequently joins himself. Rom. v. 1—11; Eph. i. 11, iii. 6. See also Chandler, Macknight, and Newcome.

⁴ *Every spiritual blessing.*] "*i. e.* the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, and the invaluable benefits of redemption." Chandler.—"every blessing, so as not to need any assistance from the law." Locke.

⁵ *Heavenly places.*] "*i. e.* the Christian church; which is now what the Jewish church formerly was, the chosen and peculiar community of God. See Eph. ii. 6, and Mr. Locke's note on Eph. i. 10. See also Dr. Chandler's note upon the text, and Dr. Macknight.—*In heavenly things.* Newcome: "in matters relating to heaven and leading us there."

⁶ *In Christ.*] "*i. e.* Christian, or belonging to Christ. Rom. xvi. 7, *q. d.* in the Christian church as distinguished from the Jewish. Or, who hath blessed us, *by* or *through* Christ, with every spiritual blessing. "*ἐν Χριστῷ* per Christum, *ejusque salutarem doctrinam.*" Rosenmüller.

according as he chose⁵ us in him before the foundation of the world⁶, that we might be holy⁷ and spotless before him⁸.

Ch. I.
Ver. 4.

Join with me, my brethren, in thankful acknowledgements to that holy and benevolent Being, whom our Master Jesus has taught us to regard as his and our God and Father, by whom he was appointed to his honourable office, and from whom he derived all his powers and qualifications for the work. To his God and ours let us give thanks, that he has in consequence of our profession of Christianity admitted us, though Gentiles, into the community of his peculiar people, and has liberally imparted to us all the privileges of the new and spiritual dispensation, without annexing any burdensome conditions. And be it known to you for your comfort and satisfaction, that this extraordinary and unhopd for blessing is not the consequence of any change in the divine councils, but from the very beginning of time he purposed to select those of the human race who would believe in Jesus, and to separate them from the unbelieving world, that, being possessed of the best means of moral improvement, they might excell all others in the practice of virtue.

3. This great blessing was the result of his eternal love, and communicated by Jesus; whose death was the seal of our forgiveness, ver. 5—7.

Having long ago⁹ in his love appointed us his adopted sons¹⁰ through

5.

⁵ *He chose us.*] As the Jews were formerly the chosen people of God, whom he selected from the mass of mankind to the possession of peculiar privileges (see Ps. cv. 6), so now believers in Christ are elected in the same manner and in the same sense. This by no means implies an arbitrary election of a few individuals to eternal life. See Chandler.—“chose the body of the Gentiles in Christ, to become disciples of Christ.” Newcome.

⁶ *Foundation of the world.*] “of the Jewish state.” Wakefield.—“before the law was, even before the foundation of the world.” Locke. Dr. Chandler observes that the word *καταβολη* is used for the beginning of any thing, and that the phrase signifies, *before the world began*; and he supposes the apostle meant to humble the pride of the Jews, who boasted that the world was created for their sakes. “We here see,” says Dr. Priestley, “how familiar it is with the sacred writers to speak of things being done before the world was, when it was only in the divine councils that they should be done: Christians could not be chosen before they were Christians. In like manner Christ is said to have glory with God before the world was; when the meaning is, that this glory was designed for him, as these honours were designed for all Christians, before either Christ or Christians had any existence.”

⁷ *Holy.*] *ἅγιοι*. “Saints,” says Mr. Locke, “in St. Paul’s epistles, is known to signify Christians, who are now the people of God.” “*Ἀμωμοί*, innocentes, sine vitio: quemadmodum in *vetere lege arietes et boves qui Deo offerebantur*. Lev. i. 3, iii. 6.” Grotius, Rosenmuller.

⁸ *Before him.*] With Griesbach and Wakefield I finish the sentence with *αὐτῷ*, “before him;” and join *ἐν ἀγάπῃ*, “in love,” to the next period.

⁹ *Having long ago.*] *προορισας*. Wakefield. “The word,” says Dr. Chandler, “properly signifies to determine, appoint, or decree any thing beforehand; and when applied to God in the case before us, it denotes his everlasting purpose, or his fixed resolution and decree before the creation of the world, to receive the believing Gentiles without circumcision into the privileges of his church and people.”

Ch. I.
Ver. 6.

*Jesus Christ*¹, according to the good pleasure of his will², to the praise of his glorious kindness, with which he graciously favoured³ us through 7. that beloved son, in whom we have deliverance, through his blood⁴: even forgiveness of our offences⁵, according to the riches of his kindness.

I repeat it again, that from pure benevolence, without any foreign consideration whatever, prompted solely by infinite love, our heavenly Father long ago marked us Gentiles out as persons who, by the mission and ministry of Jesus and his apostles, were to be invited and received into his family, upon equal terms with his ancient people, to be acknowledged by him as his children, and to be provided with a suitable inheritance. This is a privilege and a blessing so far beyond all that could have been imagined or expected by

¹⁰ *Adopted sons.*] Wakefield. υιοθεσιαν. Gr. "to the adoption of sons." To the Jews as a nation pertained the adoption, Rom. ix. 4, Exod. iv. 22: that is, they were favoured with privileges beyond all other nations, as the first-born is preferred amongst the other children. Thus the Gentiles are now appointed to the adoption of sons, being invited by the gospel to nobler privileges than the Jews were ever favoured with. See Chandler and Locke.

¹ *Through Jesus Christ.*] διαχ that is, by the mission and doctrine of Christ; who was authorized to publish the joyful tidings, and to impart the glorious privileges.

² *According to the good pleasure of his will.*] ευδοκίαν τῆς θελήματος. It was the free unmerited gift of God to the Jews to receive and acknowledge them as his people; and the communication of the blessings of the gospel to the Gentiles in consequence of believing, is equally the effect of free, unsolicited, and unmerited kindness. See Locke.

³ *Graciously favoured.*] εχαριτωσεν. Dr. Chandler observes, that "this word is not used by profane authors. It occurs Luke i. 28, 30, where it is properly rendered, *thou art highly favoured*; and the true rendering of it in this passage is not as we have translated it, "made us accepted," but "highly favoured us." So also Mr. Wakefield.

⁴ *Deliverance, through his blood.*] απολυτρωσιν. "The word (says Dr. Chandler) signifies deliverance from any thing. Luke xxi. 28; Rom. viii. 23; Heb. xi. 35." *By the blood of Christ:* that is, by means of his death. "Christ by dying," says Dr. Chandler, "annulled that law which pronounced accursed every one who did not continue in all things written in it to do them. Gal. iii. 17; Eph. ii. 16, 17." "The manner of speaking that some have allowed themselves (continues this learned and masterly expositor,) from this representation of Christ's death by his blood, viz. that a drop of Christ's blood was sufficient for the redemption of the whole world, is a very crude and unjustifiable expression, that hath nothing in reason or scripture to support it; for the great stress which scripture lays, is constantly upon the death of Christ, and not upon any shedding of his blood which implies less than his actually dying. Not to add, that his death would have been a very needless expense, could the deathless shedding of a drop, or the greatest part of his blood, have as effectually answered the purposes of God's grace; and they who by such kind of expressions think to honour Christ, should take care that they do not impeach the wisdom and goodness of God the Father." The blood of Christ is the blood of the new covenant, 1 Cor. xi. 25; i. e. by which the new covenant is ratified. It is into the participation of the blessings of this covenant that believers are introduced; and in this sense they obtain redemption by or through the blood of Christ.

⁵ *Forgiveness of offences.*] "The forgiveness of sins here spoken of," says Dr. Chandler, "is not the eternal justification of sinners from all the sins they are or can be guilty of during the whole course of their lives, but strictly and precisely this, Their being justified and delivered from all the sins of their Gentile state, and so reconciled to God as to become his people, and put into a capacity of final and eternal salvation." Gentiles, as such, being out of covenant, are sinners. Believers are in a corresponding sense holy, reconciled, and adopted. Forgiveness of sins, therefore, in this connexion, is admission to the privileges of the gospel: it is the translation from an unholy to a holy state.

poor ignorant idolatrous heathen, that it may justly be called a glorious display of divine loving-kindness which demands our highest gratitude and praise. And the manner in which this blessing is conferred enhances, if possible, its intrinsic value. The gracious message was first announced by Jesus Christ, who, in consideration of the honourable office to which he was appointed, was publicly declared to be the beloved Son of God, in whom he was well pleased; and who, in obedience to his Father's will, suffered death, in order to ratify the new covenant by which we, being delivered from the disadvantages and miseries of our heathen state, are admitted to the privileges and hopes of the sons of God. Such are the riches, and such the unsolicited and abounding freedom of the divine mercy to a numerous class of mankind, who seemed to be abandoned to hopeless ignorance, and vice, and ruin.

Ch. I.
Ver. 7.

4. The apostle celebrates the goodness of God in communicating to believers the knowledge of the new dispensation, which was before an impenetrable mystery, ver. 8—10.

Which he made to overflow on us⁶, in all wisdom and understanding⁷, by making known to us that mystery⁸ of his gracious will⁹, (which he had long before purposed in himself,) concerning¹⁰ the dispensation of the fullness of times¹¹, that he would reunite¹² all things, both in the heavens and upon earth¹³, under one head in Christ.

8.
9.
10.

⁶ *He made to overflow.*] See Knatchbull, Wakefield, Macknight. “*Quam liberalissime nobis exhibuit.*” Rosenmuller.

⁷ *In all wisdom and understanding.*] *q.d.* which riches of his grace he exhibited abundantly to us who believe, by a great increase of wisdom and understanding—which increase of wisdom was effected by making known (γνωρισας) to us the mystery, &c.: compare Col. i. 9. “I cease not to pray—that ye may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” Newcome's Translation. Mr. Locke also refers to Col. i. 28, ii. 2, 3, as parallel passages, which plainly show “that the apostle means by wisdom and understanding, a comprehension of the revealed will of God in the gospel, and particularly of the mystery of God's purpose of calling the Gentiles.” Dr. Chandler also approves of this interpretation, though he acknowledges that the words will bear a very good sense if understood of the wisdom of God in the gospel dispensation.

⁸ *Mystery.*] The secret purposes of his counsel with respect to the call of the Gentiles; “which,” says Dr. Chandler, “is the usual sense of the word mystery in the New Testament.” He supposes an allusion to the idolatrous mysteries of Diana, whose temple and worship at Ephesus were celebrated all over the world. Mr. Locke remarks that the purpose of God in the call of the Gentiles is called a mystery five times in this epistle, and four times in the epistle to the Colossians; and he thinks that the design of the apostle is to keep the Gentiles from attending to those Jews who would persuade them to submit to the yoke of the law, by assuring the Ephesians and Colossians that the Jews knew nothing of the divine purpose, which had been revealed to him with the express view of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

⁹ *His gracious will.*] τὸ θελημα αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ literally, *of his will, according to his good pleasure.* The phrase is exactly parallel to ver. 5; κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τὸ θελημα αὐτοῦ.

Ch. I.
Ver. 10.

For the better understanding of the following paraphrase, it is necessary to observe, that the word *mystery*, in the apostle's writings, expresses not some obscure and unintelligible doctrine that is still imperfectly made known, but a truth or fact which, having been unknown in former ages, is now distinctly revealed. And in this epistle, as well as in that to the Colossians, in which the word frequently occurs, it uniformly signifies the call of the Gentiles, which, though it was always intended in the eternal purpose of God, had not been clearly revealed to the Jews.

It is also of great importance to the right understanding of the epistle, to be apprized that the expressions 'heaven' and 'earth' are used in a figurative sense, and signify nothing more than 'Jew' and 'Gentile,' the persons who *are*, and they who *are not*, in a state of privilege and covenant with God. This sense of the words was not unusual amongst the Jews. The prophet Daniel calls the Jewish nation 'heaven,' Dan. viii. 10; and our Lord, (Luke xxi. 26,) by 'the powers of heaven' means 'the great men of the Jewish state.' Also Capernaum, by its privileges, is said to be exalted to heaven, Matt. xi. For this interpretation we are indebted to that excellent expositor, Mr. Locke; and it is unquestionably the true key to the interpreta-

¹⁰ Concerning.] εἰς. See Newcome. "at the dispensation." Chandler.

¹¹ The dispensation of the fulness of times.] "the gospel covenant." Gal. iv. 4. Macknight rightly interprets it, "of the dispensation in which all former dispensations terminated, and which was erected when the time fixed for it was fully come."

¹² Would reunite.] ἀνακεφαλαιωσασθαι "properly signifies," says Locke, "to recapitulate." Dr. Chandler renders the word to comprehend, sum up, or collect under one head in Christ, i. e. to unite under Christ as their common head. Archbishop Newcome gives the verb the force of the middle voice; his version is, "that he would gather together to himself in one, all things through Christ." "Ut nempe omnes creaturæ intelligentes in cælo et in terra, per Christum in unam societatem adducerentur." Rosenmuller.

¹³ Heavens and earth.] Whitby, Chandler, and the generality of expositors, understand 'things in the heavens and things on earth' to mean 'angels in heaven and believers on earth, whether Jews or Gentiles.' See Newcome; who refers to John vi. 37, 39, for an instance where the neuter is used for the masculine. Mr. Locke and Dr. Macknight understand the expression of 'Jews and Gentiles,' which seems to be the true sense of the phrase. Mr. Locke has an excellent note upon the text, which he closes with modestly observing, "However, this interpretation I am not positive in, but offer it as matter of inquiry to such who think an impartial search into the true meaning of the sacred scriptures the best employment of all the time they have." "τα ἐν θρανοῖς diversè explicatur. Multi intelligunt de dæmonibus, vel de mortuorum hominum animabus, alii de Judæis. Koppe τα ἐν θρανοῖς καὶ τα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, putat esse periphrasin universi, ut h. l. intelligantur omnes omnino homines sine discrimine gentis, Judæi et Barbari." Rosenmuller; who, however, himself, prefers the interpretation 'angels and men.' Perhaps the sense of this intricate period may be thus expressed:

'Which riches of his goodness he has abundantly exhibited to us, having enriched our understanding with a clear knowledge of that mystery which was the object of his gracious and eternal purpose, and which relates to that dispensation which has now, at the fulness of time, taken place: namely, that he would reunite under one head, even Jesus Christ, all descriptions of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles.'

tion of many difficult passages, the misunderstanding of which has greatly misled the Christian world, and given occasion to many strange conceits concerning the laws and state of the angelic powers, which, if true, are of no use; and would therefore never be made the subject of divine communication. That the apostle expresses himself in this figurative manner, may easily be accounted for by his unwillingness to give offence to his countrymen, and by the delicacy which he always observes in mentioning a subject so painful to himself, and so offensive to them, as the conversion of the heathen, and the rejection of God's ancient people. The following exposition, therefore, may perhaps convey the true meaning of the apostle's language.

Ch. I.
Ver. 10.

God has abundantly manifested those riches of his goodness to us Gentile believers, by revealing to our minds a doctrine which is to us the excellency of wisdom; far surpassing all the boasted philosophy of the schools. This he has done by unfolding to us that mysterious purpose which had hitherto been concealed under an impenetrable veil; that purpose which was formed from eternal ages in the councils of infinite benevolence, and which relates to a dispensation which, after the revolution of the destined number of ages, is now at its proper season introduced into the world. Of which new and glorious dispensation this is the gracious purport and tenor: That Gentiles as well as Jews are admitted, upon equal terms, into the kingdom of the Messiah; that they shall be collected into one body under Christ; that all shall enjoy equal privilege and equal favour; and that all invidious distinctions shall for ever cease.

5. Of this mercy the Jews were the first partakers; the invitation of the gospel having been first addressed to them, ver. 11, 12.

*In him*¹, *by whom also we*² *were invited*³, (*having been predestinated ac-*

11.

¹ *In him.*] Dr. Chandler observes that "these words are very injudiciously made, in our version, the end of the tenth verse; whereas they ought to be the beginning of the eleventh, being in strict connexion with it."

² *By whom also.*] *q. d.* "We are united in him by whom, &c." The change of persons in ver. 11 and 13 makes it probable that the apostle is here speaking of the believing Jews; especially if the phrase 'things in heaven and things on earth,' ver. 10, is to be interpreted of Jews and Gentiles. Mr Locke's objection, that the Jews are never represented as without hope, seems of little weight, especially as, on the one hand, the expression προηλπικotas does not necessarily imply that they were before entirely destitute of hope; and on the other, the apostle has taken great pains in the epistle to the Romans, ch. ii. iii., to prove that the Jews, by their immoralities, were reduced to a situation little superior to that of the unconverted heathen; so that every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God, Rom. iii. 19.

Ch. I. *according to the purpose of him who performeth all things according to the*
 Ver. 12. *determination of his own will*¹,) *that we who first hoped in Christ*² *might*
*be to the praise of his glory*³.

Though the Gentiles are invited, the Jews, the ancient people of God, are not excluded from the blessings of the gospel. It was an essential part of the plan formed in the eternal councils of infinite wisdom and benevolence, that the privileges of the new covenant should be offered in the first place to the descendants of Abraham. In pursuance of this purpose, Jesus himself, during the whole course of his personal ministry, preached to them only, and even limited the invitations of mercy to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And when he appeared to his apostles after his resurrection, and gave them a commission to preach his gospel, it was accompanied with a strict injunction that they should begin at Jerusalem, and make the first offers of the blessings of the new covenant to their own countrymen. And though it is but too true, that the generality of the Hebrew nation despised and rejected the doctrine of Christ, and hated and persecuted the teachers of it, yet it is also true, that myriads have received the tidings with joy; of which number I have the happiness to be one. And the great design of this mercy exhibited to us was, that we who were the expectants of the promised Messiah, and the first believers in the Christian doctrine, the first whose immortal hopes were founded on the promises and the resurrection of Jesus, might be duly sensible of, and gratefully acknowledge, our distinguished privileges; and that we might, by our conduct, reflect honour upon our Christian profession, and, by our unwearied exertions, might bring many others, both Jews and Gentiles, to the knowledge of the truth.

³ *Were invited.*] *εκληθημεν* this is the reading of the Alexandrine, Clermont, Corbey, and other ancient manuscripts of great repute, and of the old Italic and Vulgate versions. It is marked by Griesbach as of good authority; and seems preferable, as being more intelligible, and better suiting the connexion, than *εκληρωθημεν*, which is the common reading, and which some render 'we have obtained an inheritance,' and others, with Locke and Chandler, 'we are become the lot of his inheritance.' The Ephrem manuscript is mutilated in this passage.

¹ *Determination of his own will.*] See ver. 5, 9. his benevolent will. "*liberrima voluntas: Est in his verbis descriptio Dei omnipotentis, et immutabilis, qui omnia facit pro sua voluntate, nec mutat quod semel voluit.*" Rosenmuller.

² *Who first hoped.*] *προηλπικotas*, q.d. who were the first believers in the gospel; to whom it was preached, and by whom it was accepted before it was offered to the Gentiles. Dr. Chandler offers a different, but a very good, interpretation: "The words literally rendered are, *who before hoped in Christ*. And this I think a proper characteristic of the Jews; they had the promises of the Messiah, and therefore hoped in him before the time of his actual appearance." See Rosenmuller. "who have hoped in Christ from the first." Wakefield.

³ *To the praise of his glory.*] "might praise him for his glorious mercy vouchsafed to us." Chandler. "*ut inserviremus laudi divinæ, qui jam olim expectabamus Messiam.*" Rosenmuller.

6. In the same manner the Gentiles had been invited by Christ to the participation of the blessings of the gospel, and had been endowed by him with the holy spirit as an earnest of the future inheritance, ver. 13, 14. Ch. I.

By whom ye also were invited⁴, when ye heard the word of truth, the glad tidings of your salvation; by whom also⁵, after ye believed, ye were sealed⁶ with the holy spirit of promise⁷, which is the earnest⁸ of our inheritance, for the redemption of the purchased possession⁹, to the praise of his glory¹⁰. Ver. 13.
14.

⁴ *Ye were invited.*] The change of persons shows that the apostle is now speaking of the Gentiles. The construction of the 13th verse is the same with that of the 11th, and therefore, as Locke and Chandler have observed, requires the same word to be supplied: ver. 11, by whom we Jews were invited: ver. 13, by whom ye Gentiles were also invited—to the praise of his glory.

⁵ *By whom also.*] The same construction continues. By whom we Jews were invited—ver. 13. By whom ye Gentiles were also invited, &c.—and *by whom* ye also, upon believing, were sealed, &c.

⁶ *Were sealed.*] The gifts of the spirit, communicated by the imposition of the apostle's hands, to primitive converts upon their profession of faith, authenticated the truth of the Christian doctrine, and marked those who possessed them as the people of God; and in this view they are figuratively represented as God's seal. In the same sense circumcision is represented as the seal of God's covenant with Abraham, Rom. iv. 11. "The use of a seal," says Dr. Chandler, "is for confirmation and certainty, to ascertain and establish any thing written or done, as the act and deed of the person who writes and does it. In this sense the spirit conferred on those who believed is metaphorically called God's seal; because, as it was conferred immediately by God, in confirmation of the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ, it was a solemn assurance and proof to those who received it that they were accepted of God. Hence among the primitive Christians baptism itself was frequently styled a seal, because this spirit was frequently received immediately after baptism. Under the Old Testament Abraham received circumcision as a seal, Rom. iv. 11; not to make him a righteous person, but as a testimony from God, that he accepted him as such." Macknight says, "in allusion to the custom of merchants who marked their bales or parcels with seals, to distinguish them from the goods of others, Christ is said to have marked the Gentiles as the children of God, by bestowing on them the gifts of the spirit, see Acts xi. 18. It is well known that the servants in the temples of particular gods had marks on their bodies by which they were distinguished." The spirit, therefore, was a seal by which it was manifested to the world that they who possessed it were the chosen people, the sons of God.

⁷ *Spirit of promise.*] That is, the spirit promised by the prophets of God to the Jews, and by Christ to his apostles.

⁸ *The earnest.*] "*ἀρραβών* signifies both an *earnest* and a *pledge*; it is a part of the price paid as a security for the remainder, or it is something of value which is lodged with the creditor to be redeemed when the debt is paid. In both senses it may be figuratively applied to the gift of the holy spirit." Chandler. As the spirit is a *seal* to notify their state and character to others, so it is an *earnest* or *pledge* to assure themselves, and to satisfy their own minds that they are the sons of God; a portion of his inheritance, a part of his family.

⁹ *For the redemption of the purchased possession.*] This is the third object of the gift of the spirit: it is, first, a seal, to notify to the world; it is, secondly, an earnest to encourage the believer; thirdly, it is also given for the redemption of the purchased possession. The purchased possession is the church which Christ purchased (*περιποιήσατο*) with his own blood, Acts xx. 28; and believers are called a *purchased people*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Redemption does not always signify 'paying a ransom,' but 'deliverance from a slavish state.' So God is said to redeem the Israelites from the house of bondage, Deut. vii. 8. The spirit therefore was sent, *εἰς*, for the redemption of the purchased possession, as it was by the gifts of the spirit, and the miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles, that the Christian doctrine made its way in the world.

Ch. I.
Ver. 14.

The blessings of the gospel having been first offered to the Jews, the ancient people of God, and having been by them too generally rejected, were, by the command of Christ, offered to you Gentiles: and when the apostles and messengers of Jesus instructed you in the pure doctrine of Christ, and made known to you the joyful tidings of deliverance from ignorance, and vice, and misery, and of a resurrection to everlasting life and happiness, Christ did, by these his chosen servants, invite, and as it were beseech, you to accept the offers of mercy. Happily for you, ye were induced by the evidence proposed, to receive the doctrine, and publicly to profess your faith in Christ, and your subjection to his authority. In consequence of which he vouchsafed to you the promised effusion of his holy spirit, in various miraculous gifts and powers. This spirit he communicated as the *seal* of your adoption, the public and sensible token of your admission into the family of God, and of your title to the character and inheritance of his children. He imparted it also as to yourselves an *earnest* and *pledge* of the divine favour; so that you cannot doubt that you are received into his family, while this spirit witnesses to your hearts that you are the children of God.

These gifts of the spirit are the chief instruments which the wisdom of God employs for the redemption and recovery of those from the bondage of idolatry and vice, who are disposed to comply with the invitations of the gospel, and to become members of that holy community which in figurative language are described as redeemed to God, and as purchased by the blood of Christ.

And the great design of your invitation to the privileges of the gospel, of the gifts of the spirit, and your equality of state with God's ancient people, is, that you should unite with them in ascribing praise and glory to your common Father and God for his abundant mercy.

"This interpretation (says Mr. Locke, to whom we are wholly indebted for this admirable solution of a most difficult passage,) best answers Paul's design here, which is, to establish the Ephesians in a settled persuasion that they, and all the other Gentiles who believed in Christ, were as much the people of God, his lot and his inheritance, as the Jews themselves, and equally partakers with them of all the privileges and advantages belonging thereunto, as is visible by the tenour of the second chapter. And this is the use St. Paul mentions of God's setting his seal (2 Tim. ii. 19,) to mark them that are his. See also Rev. vii. 3, iv. 1. Those who purchased servants did, as it were, take possession of them by setting their marks on their foreheads."

¹⁰ *To the praise of his glory.*] See ver. 12. The Gentiles are called and sealed, &c., that they, as well as the believing Jews, may celebrate the praises of God for his abundant mercy.

SECTION II.

THE APOSTLE gives thanks to God for the perseverance of his brethren in their Christian profession; and prays continually that they may be duly sensible of the extraordinary manifestation of divine power and mercy in their conversion from heathen idolatry; which, indeed, bore a striking analogy to that by which Jesus was raised from the dead, and exalted to supreme authority in the new and heavenly dispensation. Ch. i. 15—ii. 10. Ch. I.

1. The apostle gives thanks to God continually for the progress which his brethren make in faith and love; and prays that they may be duly sensible of the value of the Christian dispensation, ver. 15—18.

Wherefore, I also, having heard¹ of your faith in the Lord Jesus², and love to all³ the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ⁴, the Father of glory⁵, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation to the knowledge of him⁶, that the eyes of your mind being enlightened⁷, ye may know what Ver. 15. 16. 17. 18.

¹ *Having heard, &c.*] This is regarded by some as a presumptive argument that the epistle was not written to the Ephesians, with whose faith and love the apostle must have been personally acquainted; but it is properly enough replied that the apostle, having been absent from them five or six years when the epistle was written, might have heard with pleasure of their perseverance in the Christian doctrine, 1 Thess. iii. 4—6; Philem. ver. 4, 5. See Doddridge, Chandler, and Macknight.

² *Faith in the Lord Jesus.*] “hearing of their faith is not his being told that they were Christians, but their continuing in that faith which they were converted to and instructed in; viz. that they became the people of God only by faith in Christ, without submitting to the Mosaical institution.” Locke.

³ *All the saints.*] Mr. Locke observes, “that *all* is here an emphatical word, put in for some particular reason; viz. that they were not by the Judaizers drawn away from their esteem and love of those who did not observe the Jewish rites; which was a proof that they stood firm in the faith and freedom of the gospel.” Dr. Chandler agrees in this interpretation.

⁴ *God of Jesus Christ.*] See John xx. 17. What plainer proof can there be that Jesus Christ is the creature of God, and not his equal? Dr. Chandler observes, “that it can never in any sense be said of Christ that he is God of the Eternal Father.” “Here it is evident,” says Dr. Priestley, “that all the illumination the apostle prayed for, was to come from God the Father, who is here called *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*; the same, no doubt, who was the author of his being, whom he reverently worshiped, and whom he taught his disciples to worship: so far was he from teaching the worship of himself.”

⁵ *Father of glory.*] “either possessed of eternal unchangeable glory, or the author and bestower of glory, in which sense the word rendered ‘Father’ is sometimes used. James i. 17.” Chandler. “being glorious himself, the fountain from which all glory is derived, and to whom all glory must be given.” Locke.

⁶ *To the knowledge of him.*] *εν επιγνωσει*, in, &c. Dr. Chandler observes, “that *εν* is fre-

Ch. I.
Ver. 18.

*is the hope of this invitation by him*¹, *and what the glorious riches of that inheritance*² which he hath given you among the saints.

Having, as I have just observed, been invited by Christ to a participation of the blessings of the gospel, and favoured with the gift of the holy spirit, as the seal and earnest of the promised inheritance, I am anxious that you should duly appreciate your great privileges. And, in the first place, having received the pleasing intelligence of your perseverance in the faith in which you have been instructed, notwithstanding opposition and danger; and of your fraternal affection to believers of all denominations, notwithstanding some accidental differences in opinion or practice, and the pains which some who are bigots to the ceremonial law take to pervert your judgement, and to give you an ill opinion of all who are not equally rigid with themselves; for this your firmness of principle, and liberality of spirit, I offer my daily thanksgivings to God, to whose grace and favour all attainments in moral excellence are justly to be ascribed. To these thanksgivings I add fervent prayers to that great Being whom our Master Jesus Christ has taught us to adore as his God and our God; and to venerate as our common Father to whom all glory belongs, and from whom all honour and happiness is derived; of whom I earnestly implore, that he will impart to you that perfect knowledge of revealed truth which will lead you with still greater courage and zeal to profess your faith in the heavenly doctrine: And that your understandings may be so enlightened by the instructions of the gospel, and

quently used by the best writers for *εἰς*, to denote the end and design of any thing." By 'the spirit of wisdom and revelation,' Archbishop Newcome justly remarks, that the apostle means the knowledge of revealed truths, 1 Cor. xiv. 6, 26, 30. *The knowledge of him, that is, 'of the doctrine of God.'*

⁷ *Eyes of your mind being enlightened.*] "The Greek is in the accusative absolute." Newcome. The best copies read *καρδίας*, heart, instead of *διανοίας*, understanding; and Griesbach receives it into his text. The meaning is the same. "The expression," says Dr. Chandler, "is certainly explicative of the former words, and should have been rendered, *even enlightened eyes of your understanding*. 'I make mention of you,' says the apostle, 'in my prayers, that God would give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, even enlightened eyes of your understanding; i. e. a mind free from prejudice and darkness, that you may clearly apprehend, and pass a true judgement concerning, the great object of your hopes as Christians.'"

¹ *This invitation by him.*] See Wakefield. *της κλησεως αυτου*, of his invitation.

² *The glorious riches of that inheritance, &c.*] So Wakefield. Gr. *of his inheritance among the aints*. "that you may see what an abundant glory it is to the saints, to become his people, and the lot of his inheritance." Locke.

Perhaps the true meaning of this paragraph may be thus briefly expressed:

Having heard of your perseverance in the true faith, and of your love to all believers, without distinction of Jew or Gentile, I thank God on your account. And I also pray that God would enlighten your mind in revealed truths, that you may clearly understand the object of Christian hope, and the unspeakable importance of your admission into the pale of the Christian church, and to the privileges of the people of God.

the gifts of the spirit, that you may be fully apprized of the inestimable value of your Christian hope: and may be duly sensible of the high importance of your Christian profession, and of your unspeakable obligation to the mercy of God in thus freely admitting you into the Christian community, and to the glorious privileges of his peculiar people!

Ch. I.
Ver. 18.

2. The apostle further prays that they may be properly apprized of that great display of divine power which had been manifested in their conversion to the faith: an exertion analogous to that by which Christ was raised from the dead, and exalted to be the head of the new and evangelical dispensation, ver. 19, 20.

And what is the exceeding³ greatness of his power toward us who believe, corresponding with the energy of his mighty strength⁴ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and seated him at his own right hand⁵ in the heavenly places⁶.

19.
20.

I also earnestly pray, that you may be duly sensible of the extraordinary manifestation of his power which God has been pleased to display in all who sincerely believe, and particularly in subduing their inveterate prejudices, whether Jews or heathen: a power which, when I consider the astonishing effect produced in our conversion to the Christian faith, and in the wonderful change which it has effected in our views, affections, and practice, I can compare to nothing less than to that amazing effort of omnipotence, if I may so express it, by which our Master Jesus Christ was raised from the grave and advanced to the highest dignity and authority in the new

³ *Exceeding greatness of his power.*] “That is,” says Dr. Chandler, “that you may be able to form some suitable conception of that amazing infinite power of God which he shall exert in our future resurrection.” So Dr. Macknight. Mr. Locke’s interpretation appears to me far preferable: “What an exceeding great power he has employed upon us who believe! a power corresponding to that mighty power which he exerted in raising Christ from the dead.” This sense is adopted by Archbishop Newcome.

⁴ *Energy of his mighty strength.*] Dr. Doddridge observes that the admirable beauty of this passage, and the strong emphasis and force of the expressions in the original, are well set forth by Bishop Pearson (*on the Creed*, p. 519), as scarcely to be paralleled in any author; and superior to what our language can reach. Blackwall’s *Sacred Classics*, vol. i. p. 307.

⁵ *His own right hand.*] “The right hand is the seat of dignity and honour; and therefore when God the Father is said to have set Christ at his right hand, the meaning is, that he placed him next in dignity to himself.” Chandler. *i. e.* as head of the Christian church.

⁶ *Heavenly places:*] or, *things.* *i. e.* in his heavenly kingdom; or, the gospel dispensation. See Matt. iii. 2, xvi. 7; John iii. 2. Mr. Locke says, “the whole drift of this and the following two chapters is to declare the union of Jews and Gentiles into one body under Christ, the head of the heavenly kingdom. And he that sedately compares Eph. ii. 16 with Col. i. 20, in both which places it is evident the apostle speaks of the same thing, viz. God’s reconciling both Jews and Gentiles by the cross of Christ, will scarce be able to avoid thinking that ‘things in heaven and things on earth’ signify the people of the one and the other of these kingdoms.”

Ch. I. and heavenly dispensation; which is as much superior to any that preceded
Ver. 20. it as heaven to earth.

3. Having mentioned the exaltation of Christ, he expatiates upon this pleasing topic in language borrowed from the Jewish notions of the celestial hierarchy; and represents the dependence of the whole Christian church upon communications from him, to be as entire as that of the body upon the head, ver. 21—23.

21. *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion¹, and every name that is named, not only in the present age, but in that also which*
22. *is to come². And he hath put all things in subjection under his feet³; and*
23. *hath appointed him⁴ head over all things in the church, which is his body⁵, the completion⁶ of him who filleth all, with all things.*

¹ *Principality, &c.*] These titles are commonly understood to express ranks of angels, and the text is generally interpreted as asserting the dominion of Christ over the angelic world. But if Mr. Locke's interpretation of *heavenly places* in the preceding verse be the true one, then *principalities, powers, &c.* can only signify officers of different ranks and degrees under a divine dispensation, such as prophets, priests, apostles, teachers, &c., to all of whom Christ is in dignity and office far superior, being the head of them all, the chief of all the prophets of God.

“ These abstract names are frequently used in the New Testament, according to the style of the eastern languages, for those vested with power and dominion, &c., and that not only here on earth among men, but in heaven among superior beings, and so often are taken to express ranks and degrees of angels; and though they are generally agreed to do so here, yet there is no reason to exclude earthly potentates. Besides, the apostle's chief aim here being to satisfy the Ephesians that they were not to be subjected to the law of Moses, and the government of those who ruled by it, but they were called to be of the kingdom of the Messiah, it is not to be supposed that where he speaks of Christ's exaltation to a power and dominion paramount to all other, he should not have an eye to that little and low government of the Jews, which it was beneath the subjects of so glorious a kingdom to subject themselves unto.” Locke.

The Jewish dispensation having been represented as “ heavenly places,” the superiority of Christ to the officers of that dispensation is naturally described as an exaltation above the supposed ranks and orders of beings in those heavenly places: but as Christ is also superior to all the officers of his church, this superiority is represented as an exaltation above such supposed orders of beings in the world, or age to come, that is, the Christian dispensation, as well as in the present world, or age, that is, the dispensation of the law. So that there is no reason to suppose that the apostle had any intention to express or allude to the superiority of Christ above angels in heaven.

² *The present age:]* or, *dispensation*. See Mr. Locke's note on Eph. ii. 2. That *αιων* has the sense of *dispensation* does not admit of a doubt. See Heb. i. 2.

³ *Put all things, &c.]* Alluding to Ps. cx. 1; Ps. viii. 6—8; 1 Cor. xv. 25, 27; Heb. ii. 8.

⁴ *Appointed.]* “ In the original ‘ given:’ a Hebrew phraseology. See Gen. xvii. 5; Ezek. iii. 17.” Newcome.

⁵ *Which is his body.]* “ deriving all its nourishment and influences, its growth and support, its direction and management, from Christ as the head: even as the natural body is influenced and supported, guided and managed, by its natural head.” Chandler.

⁶ *The completion.]* πληρωμα, “ the complement:” that which is wanting to make an object complete. “ The Jews and Gentiles,” says Dr. Chandler, “ are the different members of Christ's church, and these different members are the full complement of his body. The word

Ch. I.
Ver. 23.

Our glorious Lord and Master, being thus advanced by the power of God to supreme authority in his church, is made superior to all other teachers and prophets, how important soever the instructions they were authorized to communicate, how splendid soever the attestations of their mission, to whomsoever their message was addressed, or by whatever names and titles of civil or ecclesiastical authority they have been, or may be, dignified. Whether they lived under the old or under the new dispensation, whether the objects of their instructions were Jews or Gentiles, or both, they must all bow to the authority of Jesus, and acknowledge him as their superior and lord. His dignity is more exalted, his mission is more important, his miracles are more splendid, his dominion is more extensive and durable. Of him it is declared (Ps. viii. 6), that "all things are put in subjection under his feet:" by which is meant, that the whole world shall in due time embrace the gospel, and yield a willing subjection to his gentle yoke. And in the mean time God has authorized him to impart all necessary information to true believers, and to supply them with those gifts of the spirit which contribute to their conviction, edification, and comfort. So that Christ and his church form as it were a complete person: Christ is the head, and the church the body, which derives that light and vigour, and vital influence from him by his doctrine and his spirit, which are essential to the life and nourishment, the growth and beauty of every part, and to the symmetry and perfection of the whole.

4. The apostle proceeds to illustrate his position, that the power of God manifested in the conversion of Jews and heathen, and in their admission to the privileges and hopes of the gospel, is analogous to that power which was displayed in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ, ch. ii. 1—6.

πληρωμα is used in a sense like this by the best Greek writers. *Æl. V. H. l. 5, c. 10.* The learned writer imagines an allusion to the statue of Diana at Ephesus; but with little appearance of reason.

"It is a fine figure," says Dr. Priestley, "by which Christ is here represented as the head, and his disciples the body, all being one and the same system, he only having pre-eminence in point of honour, distinction, and usefulness. A similar idea is expressed by Christ being called our elder brother, implying that he is one of the same species and family. Accordingly, when he is called an heir of God, his brethren are joint heirs with him. This doctrine is uniformly inculcated in the New Testament, and we ought to have our minds deeply impressed with it, and fully to understand its value, in opposition to that strange system, however prevalent, which makes Christ a being of equal rank with God his Father; and thus in fact makes three Gods, or objects of religious worship. If any article of faith be worth earnestly contending for, it is this."

Ch. II.
Ver. 1.

And you hath God brought to life with Christ¹, who are now dead to transgressions and sins².

Such is the astonishing power which Almighty God hath displayed in the resurrection of Christ, and in his exaltation to supreme authority in the church. Similar to this, and equally illustrative of divine power and goodness, is the wonderful change which has taken place in you Gentiles, in your conversion to the Christian religion. It may justly be said of you, that you have undergone a transformation equivalent to a death, a resurrection, and an exaltation. You are dead to your former state of idolatry and vice; and by the same power of God which raised up Jesus you are now animated with a life and spirit far different from that of your unconverted state.

2. *In which ye formerly walked³ according to the course of this world⁴, according to the prince of the power of the air⁵, of the spirit which now worketh⁶ in the sons of disobedience.*

¹ *And you hath God brought to life.]* Dr. Chandler, and after him Dr. Macknight, supplies the ellipsis in this verse from the preceding; viz. "you hath he filled who were dead," &c. Mr. Locke, with the public version and the generality of commentators, supplies the ellipsis from the fifth verse: *q. d.* you hath he brought to life with Christ. See Wakefield. The train of thought is this: I pray daily for you, ch. i. 16, that you may be apprized of the value of the inheritance, ver. 18,—and of the great power of God exerted upon you, ver. 19,—similar to that exerted in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, ver. 20—23;—so likewise has he raised you who are now dead to your former state, ch. ii. 1,—in which you once lived, ver. 2;—and likewise we Jews, being in a situation equally deplorable, ver. 3,—are nevertheless made objects of mercy, ver. 4;—and being dead to our former state, ver. 5,—we and you are raised and exalted together with Christ, ver. 5, 6,—as monuments of free unmerited goodness, ver. 7—9,—to the practice of virtue, ver. 10. See Locke's note; who observes, that the conjunction *καί* gives us here the thread of Paul's discourse, which it is impossible to understand without seeing the train of it.

² *Dead to transgressions and sins.]* "to trespasses and sins." Wakefield. Dr. Chandler acknowledges that the words admit of being translated *dead to trespasses*, though he prefers the common translation. The best commentary upon this text is the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which the same thought is pursued at large. The apostle does not mean to represent the unconverted Gentiles as in a state of death, but as living in sin, and to the purposes of sin. When converted to the gospel, they die to sin; *i. e.* they renounce the idolatry and vices of their heathen state: and when by the profession of Christianity they entertain new views and expectations, and lead a different course of life, they are said, by Christ, and with Christ, and in resemblance of Christ, to be raised to life and exalted to heaven.

³ *In which ye formerly walked:]* that is, *lived*; not in which you were dead. You were then alive to sin: sin was your master, in whose service you exerted all your powers. See Rom. vi.

⁴ *Course of this world.]* Dr. Chandler observes, "that the Greek word *αἰών* and the Latin *ævum* both signify the life of man, and from thence by an easy figure the manner and custom of a person's living. It here signifies the corrupt principles and idolatrous practices of the Gentile world." "*Αἰών*, quodvis temporis spatium, *s. longius, s. brevius*—integram durationem accommodatam nempe rebus et personis de quibus sermo est, significat, ita tamen, ut etiam res et personas durantes, res in tempore factas, seu, existentes, per metonymiam adjuncti complectatur: ingenium ætatis—vivendi ratio. Rom. xii. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 6." Schleusner. Very properly rendered "the course of this world."

⁵ *The prince of the power of the air:]* *i. e.* Satan, the mythological head of the unbelieving

In your former heathen state you were the devoted subjects of the worst of tyrants; you lived in the unrestrained practice of those vices which were authorized and allowed by the idolatry of your country; you behaved like the rest of the heathen world, like the subjects of Satan, whose kingdom is in direct hostility to that of truth and virtue, of God and Christ: who is supposed by his deluded votaries to inhabit the regions of the air; and whose spirit, the spirit of obstinacy, of error, of malignity, and mischief, possesses and actuates the minds of the mass of unbelievers, and impels them, like madmen, to reject and vilify the salutary scheme, and gracious offers of the gospel.

Ch. II.
Ver. 2.

Among whom we all likewise lived formerly, in our carnal desires, indulging the inclinations of the senses and of the thoughts⁷, and were by nature children of wrath⁸ even as the rest.

3.

world; whose residence was supposed to be in the air, as that of Christ was supposed to be above him in the heavens. There is no occasion to suppose, either, with Dr. Harwood, that Jupiter is the person alluded to by the apostle, (see Harwood's *Introd. to New Test.*) or with many, that the devil is a real being, who resides in the air and who has power to govern the changes of the atmosphere. This most improbable doctrine, which makes a malignant spirit a colleague with the Deity in the government of the universe, receives no countenance from the writings of Paul, who only alludes to a mythology already subsisting. Should it be alleged, that if Satan be a figurative person, Christ, who is opposed to him as the ruler of the believing world, must also be a figurative person, it may perhaps be allowed, that when Christ is thus put in opposition to Satan, the word may, sometimes at least, be taken in a figurative sense to express the spirit and the principles of the Christian religion, in opposition to the spirit and principles of heathenism and idolatry. Mr. Wakefield renders the clause, "the ruler of this empire of darkness." Archbishop Newcome remarks, that though the sense of *darkness* is very suitable to *anp* in this place, and is attributed to it by Cocceius, Heinsius, and Wakefield, he cannot find it used thus except in the feminine gender. See 2 Pet. ii. 4, Jude 6.

⁶ *Which now worketh.*] *επεργαυτος*. Mr. Locke observes, that "this is the proper term whereby in the Greek is signified the possession and acting of any person by an evil spirit." The apostle represents unconverted heathen as demoniacs, as madmen, as men out of their senses. See Doddridge.

⁷ *Of the senses and of the thoughts.*] Literally, *of the flesh and of the imaginations*. See Macknight. Dr. Chandler says "the literal version of the words is this, *doing the wills of the flesh and of the thoughts*: i. e. they did whatever their fleshly appetites prompted them to; and not only thus, but they studied after methods of vice and wickedness, and employed their thoughts how to invent new gratifications of their corrupt appetites and passions, and allowed themselves the freest indulgence in them." It was a maxim of the pharisees, that thoughts were not sinful.

⁸ *By nature children of wrath:*] i. e. we Jews, like you Gentiles, were, *antecedent to our conversion to Christianity*, in a state of condemnation under the righteous law of God. See Gal. i. 15. 'we who were Jews by nature,' i. e. before our conversion to Christianity, 'and not sinners of the Gentiles.' That Jews as well as Gentiles were in a state of condemnation previously to the publication of Christianity, the apostle proves at large in the first three chapters of the epistle to the Romans. See particularly Rom. iii. 19, 20. How far this text, thus explained according to its true import, is from giving countenance to the commonly received doctrine of original sin, is sufficiently obvious. "It is evident (says Dr. Chandler) by the very form of expression, that the apostle refers to their condition before their conversion, and not to that which may be at all times affirmed equally of all mankind. For he says, and *were* by nature, not *are* by

Ch. II.
Ver. 3.

And to say the truth, we Jews, notwithstanding all our professions of sanctity and our means of better information, were sunk in vices as gross as those of the heathen world; equally with the Gentiles, whom we despised, yielding ourselves to the direction of our unbridled appetites and passions, and the strictest among us pleading for the uncontrouled indulgence of licentious imaginations; being utter strangers to that purity of principle which imposes severe restraints upon the thoughts and purposes of the heart. So that, antecedently to our conversion to the Christian religion, we were, nationally, as forlorn, and as liable to condemnation, as the unbelieving world now are.

4. *But God being rich in mercy, according to his great love with which he*
5. *loved us, hath made us, who are now dead to sins¹, alive together with Christ:*
6. *by whose free favour ye are delivered²; and hath raised us up with him, and hath made us sit together with him, in heavenly places³, by Christ Jesus.*

Nevertheless it pleased God, who delights in mercy, that where sin had abounded, mercy should also abound. And not regarding even us sinful and apostate Jews as utterly unworthy of his notice, he has vouchsafed to

nature; and therefore their being formerly children of wrath could only refer to the vices of their condition before conversion, and means no more than their being subject to God's displeasure, because educated and brought up in, and habituated by inclination and practice to, the worst of immoralities and vices. This is the meaning of the word in the best writers." The learned author proceeds to cite authorities to prove that the word *φύσις*, *nature*, is used to express a disposition contracted by habit. I am, however, rather inclined to think that the apostle uses the word in a technical sense, to express the condition in which they were born, that is, out of covenant; and he affirms that his countrymen, however they might pride themselves in their privileges, had by their transgressions cast themselves, as a nation, out of covenant, and were therefore, antecedently to their conversion, in no better state than the Gentiles themselves, whom they familiarly spoke of as sinners, and children of wrath. See Rom. ii. 17—20; Gal. ii. 15. "By nature, in our original state: before conversion. *children of anger*. Heirs of the divine displeasure on account of our *actual* vices." Newcome.

¹ Now dead to sins.] Not in sins, but to sins: *i. e.* to our former unconverted state. "made us, now dead to sins, alive together with Christ." Wakefield.

² By whose favour ye are delivered.] *ἐν τῇ χάριτι*. This is the reading of the Clermont and other ancient manuscripts, and of the Vulgate and Italic versions; and it best suits the connexion. See Chandler. The gospel is often called the grace or gift of Christ, because Christ was the medium of communicating this great blessing to the world. "Ye are saved," *i. e.* delivered from the evils of your heathen state; as the context sufficiently shows. The apostle here resumes his discourse concerning the heathen converts, and speaks of believers in general to the end of the section.

³ Hath made us sit together with him in heavenly places.] Observe, the apostle says, God *hath* brought us to life, *hath* raised us up, *hath* made us sit in heavenly places by Christ: not he *will* do it. Therefore it is not a literal, but a figurative resurrection and ascension that is here intended, and a figurative heaven. The plain meaning is, that Jew and Gentile believers, having completely renounced former errors, prejudices, and vices, are now advanced to the privileges and hopes of the gospel. This is that kingdom of heaven of which Christ is appointed to be the sovereign; and as believers sit with him who sitteth at the right hand of God, they share with him in his dignity and authority, and under his auspices are employed in extending the limits of his glorious kingdom.

raise to life, as Christ was raised, all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are dead to our former state of ignorance and wickedness, and who are willing to renounce all dependence on ceremonial rites, and to reinstate us in a life of virtue, privilege, and hope. This favour we have obtained by the grace of Christ, through faith in the gospel of our common Master. And as he is raised by the power of God, and exalted to the highest dignity in the new and heavenly dispensation, so we likewise are exalted with him, and are even now seated with him, and near him, in his heavenly kingdom: gratefully acknowledging subjection to him as our governor and head, deriving evangelical blessings from him, and in our respective posts employing and exerting our best talents to extend the limits of his auspicious empire.

CH. II.
Ver. 6.

5. This whole scheme is an illustrious display of undeserved and unexpected mercy, which precludes all boasting on the part of those who are interested in it and benefited by it, ver. 7—10.

That in the ages which are coming⁴ he might show the superabundant riches of his favour and kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

7.

The design and end of all these extraordinary operations of divine power in our conversion to the Christian faith, and in thus transferring us, as it were, from an earthly to a heavenly state, from a state of ignorance and prejudice, and vice and misery, to a state of light and virtue, and privilege and hope, is to exhibit and to magnify his unspeakable mercy and compassion in this new dispensation, which his faithful and holy servant and messenger Jesus of Nazareth has been commissioned to introduce into the world.

For by free favour ye are delivered through faith, and this⁵ not of your-

8.

⁴ *The ages which are coming:] i. e. the gospel dispensation. Mark xi. 10; Heb. vi. 5, ii. 5.—*“God was pleased to quicken and raise up the Gentiles who believed, that in all successive ages of the world they might stand as a demonstration of the acceptableness of faith in God, and of his fixed purposes of mercy and grace towards all without exception that should receive and obey the gospel. The conversion of the Gentiles by the ministry of the apostles, was a great instance of God’s goodness to them, and a standing proof, throughout all future ages, of the certainty of God’s favour to all who should believe, to the end of time.” Chandler. “The great favour and goodness of God,” says Mr. Locke, “manifests itself in the salvation of sinners in all ages; but that which most eminently sets forth the glory of his grace was *the case* of those who were first of all converted from heathenism to Christianity, and brought out of the kingdom of darkness, in which they were as dead men, without life, hope, or so much as a thought of salvation or a better state, into the kingdom of God.”

⁵ *And this:] και τῆτο.* Dr. Doddridge and others contend that *faith* is the antecedent; Chandler, Newcome and others refer *τῆτο* to the whole antecedent sentence: *q. d.* this salvation by faith is the gift of God. The sense amounts nearly to the same; the glory of all is to be

Ch. II.
Ver. 9.
10.

selves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works¹, which God hath before prepared for us, that we should walk in them².

I again repeat, that it is solely to be imputed to the free, unsolicited, and unmerited goodness of God that you have been delivered from the evils and disadvantages of your heathen state, and by the profession of faith in Christ have been admitted to participate in the privileges of the gospel. And this deliverance is to be ascribed to no merit and to no effort on your part: you neither knew the danger of your case nor sought for deliverance. You owe all to the free gift of God. He formed the plan, he annexed the condition, he made the discovery, he proposed the evidence. You yourselves had no concern in the contrivance, and contributed nothing to the execution of the glorious scheme. So that no one can boast of himself as a party concerned in producing this astonishing effect. So far from it, you were as little accessory to it as if you had not even existed: for the change which you have undergone, in passing from heathenism to Christianity, is like that of passing

ascribed to God. Dr. Doddridge in favour of his interpretation pleads Phil. i. 28; Eph. vi. 18; Gal. iii. 17, iv. 19; and refers to Elsner's *Obs.* vol. i. p. 128, and Raphelius *Annot. ex Herod.* p. 186. Faith may be called the gift of God, as he communicated the evidences and placed the mind in circumstances in which those evidences produced conviction. Dr. Chandler contends that his translation is more agreeable to the construction and the context.

¹ *Created in Christ Jesus.*] *κτισθεντες*: “the original word, which we render *create*, properly signifies to *produce* or *form* any thing. Thus it is used by the best writers for the building of walls and cities, the planting of groves, the making laws, &c. So that it is not strictly applied to what we mean by creation, nor doth it involve the notion of almighty power: and in Latin Cicero speaks of *creating* magistrates, dangers, calamities, &c. The Ephesians were God's workmanship, *created* in or by Christ Jesus to good works; brought by his gospel to the knowledge of true religion and virtue, and quickened by the powerful motives contained in it to obey and live according to the precepts thereof. The forming particular doctrines from metaphorical expressions, and straining similitudes to their utmost extent, is not to explain but pervert the sense of writers, to make them speak in the most absurd and unintelligible manner, and to expose their meaning to ridicule and contempt.” Chandler.

² *Which God, &c.*] Archbishop Newcome renders the words, “in which God before designed that we should walk.” He observes, that instead of *εν οἷς—ἵνα περιπατήσωμεν*, the apostle uses a pleonastic pronoun, after the Hebrew manner. Dr. Chandler has an excellent note upon the text: “God (says he) prepared ordinances and statutes for his people the Jews under the law by Moses, that they should observe and do them, Prov. xxiv. 27, Ps. lix. 4. But under the gospel dispensation he intended a more excellent service, and chose us that we should be holy and without blame before him in Christ. These works he prepared for the gospel dispensation, as what should supersede all ceremonial observances.”

Upon the whole, the sum of the apostle's argument is this: The conversion of Jews and Gentiles to the Christian faith is an extraordinary effort of divine power, the result of unsought for, unmerited goodness; the end and design of which is to form those who are so converted to the love and practice of virtue.

Mr. Locke has a long note upon the eighth verse, to show that “the apostle, when speaking of the Gentiles, calls their being brought back again from their apostasy into the kingdom of God, their being saved.”

from nothing into existence. It is a new creation. God has herein, as it were, formed you anew; and by Jesus Christ he has introduced you into a new state of existence, upon new conditions of life. For, as to Adam in paradise was given the law of innocence, and to the Jews by Moses, the law of Sinai, the yoke of ceremonies, so, to believers in Christ is given the law of virtue and beneficence, love to God and love to man, by which it was long ago determined and foretold that the followers of Jesus should be distinguished from the unbelieving world, and become entitled to the promised blessings of the gospel.

Ch. II.
Ver. 10.

SECTION III.

THE APOSTLE, in order to excite in the Christian converts a just sense of the inestimable value of the blessings of the gospel, strongly urges them to retain an habitual recollection of the miseries of their past, and of the privileges of their present condition. Ch. ii. 11—22.

1. He reminds them of the disgrace and danger of their heathen state, ver. 11—13.

*Wherefore remember, that ye who were originally Gentiles by descent³,
(being called the uncircumcision⁴, by that which is called the circumcision
performed by hands in the flesh⁵), were at that time without Christ⁶, aliens
from the community⁷ of Israel, and strangers to the covenants⁸, having no
hope of the promise⁹, and without God¹⁰ in the world.*

11.

12.

³ *By descent.*] *ἐν σαρκί* literally, *in the flesh*. Rom. i. 3. See Chandler's note. "Gentiles born."

⁴ *Called the uncircumcision*] "by the Jews in contempt; implying that they were destitute of every privilege in which they imagined themselves interested, and of which they looked upon circumcision as a seal or mark." Chandler.

⁵ *In the flesh.*] To distinguish it from the circumcision of the heart, Rom. ii. 29; in which they were miserably deficient, Col. ii. 11. "which consists in cutting off and casting away the sinful affections, passions, and habits, of a corrupted mind." Chandler.

⁶ *Without Christ.*] "destitute of all knowledge of the Messiah, or any expectation of deliverance or salvation by him." Locke; who argues, that the connexion determines this to be the sense of the words.

⁷ *Aliens, &c.*] "They had no right of citizenship in the Jewish polity, nor any claim to the privileges of citizens." Chandler. "The Jews were then the only people of God." Locke.

⁸ *Strangers to the covenants.*] *i. e.* "the patriarchal and Mosaic covenants, which promised the Messiah, Rom. ix. 4." Newcome. Mr. Wakefield's version is, "strangers to the cove-

Ch. II.
Ver. 12.

I have been representing to you the extraordinary exertion of divine power and goodness in your conversion to the Christian religion, that you might be reclaimed to the love and practice of righteousness. And indeed it is highly reasonable that you should retain a just sense of the value of your present privileges, which you will best accomplish by contrasting your present happy condition with your former forlorn and miserable state. Remember then, my brethren, what you originally were: ignorant, idolatrous, and vicious heathen; regarded and treated with the utmost contempt by the Jews, who glory in the external marks of their relation to God, though they are too often deficient in that spirit of piety and purity which their profession requires, and their law inculcates. In this unhappy state you had neither hope nor wish for a deliverer: not being descended from the ancient patriarchs, you were excluded from the privileges entailed upon their posterity, and from the community which God had selected as his own. You had never heard of the covenants which God had entered into with Abraham and his descendants, in which he promised his favour upon condition of obedience, and foretold the appearance of a great prophet, who should instruct them in a more perfect institute than that of Moses. In consequence of this ignorance, you had no interest in the promises, no expectation of any improvement of your moral condition, nor any hope of a future life. You had no just ideas of the nature and character of God; you neither loved nor worshiped him; you were enemies to him by wicked works, and outcasts from his favour; you were mere men of the world, who only sought after worldly pleasures, and who looked for nothing beyond the present life.

2. He reminds them of the happy change which had taken place in their condition by faith in Christ, ver. 13.

13. *But now, in Christ Jesus¹, ye who formerly were far off², are brought near by the blood of Christ³.*

nants, having no hope of the promise, and without God, men of this world." This alteration in the punctuation is suggested in Bowyer's *Conjectures*.

⁹ *No hope of the promise.*] i. e. of those blessings which the promises contained, justification by faith, acceptance with God, as his children, a title to the inheritance of eternal life. See Chandler.

¹⁰ *Without God.*] "without having the true God for their God." Locke; who observes, that "it is in this sense the Gentiles are called *αθεοι*, few of them being, properly speaking, atheists, denying the existence of superior powers." See Rom. ix. 5; with Taylor's or Crellius's note.

¹ *In Christ Jesus.*] "since your conversion to the faith of Christ." Chandler. q. d. you being in Christ Jesus, that is, in the number of his disciples. See Rom. xvi. 7.

Your state is now wonderfully improved. Instead of being at a distance from God, excluded from his temple, and regarded as aliens and enemies, you are admitted into his holy place, and brought near to his person, by your conversion to the Christian religion; being, as it were, consecrated and purified by the blood of Christ, which was shed to ratify the new and more comprehensive covenant, and to put an end to the distinction between Jew and Gentile.

3. By his death having abolished all ceremonial distinctions, Jesus has reconciled Jews and Gentiles to each other, and to God, ver. 14—18.

For he is our peace⁴: who hath united both⁵, and hath removed the enmity, the middle wall of partition⁶; having in his own person abolished⁷ the law of commandments, consisting in ordinances⁸.

14.

15.

² *Far off.*] From the connexion, and from ver. 17, it seems evident that the expressions 'far off' and 'near' allude to the situation of the worshipers in the outer and the inner courts of the temple, the court of the Gentiles and that of the Jews. So the publican in the parable is described as standing afar off, *i. e.* in the court of the Gentiles, Luke xviii. 13.

³ *By the blood of Christ.*] Qu. How by the blood of Christ? The apostle immediately explains himself. The death of Christ broke down the partition wall, and opened a way for the worshipers in the outer court to advance into the holy place.

⁴ *Our peace.*] *i. e.* the maker or author of peace, see ver. 15; a common phraseology: so (ver. 15) the partition wall, the ceremonial law, is called 'the enmity,' being the cause or the sign of enmity. Compare Gen. xv. 1, 1 Thess. ii. 20. "The cause of peace and union between Jews and Gentiles." Newcome.

⁵ *United both:*] *i. e.* those who were far off, and those who were near; those who were in the outer, and those in the inner courts. Literally, "he hath made both one."

⁶ *The enmity, the wall of partition,*] which separated the court of the Gentiles from that where the Jews worshiped, and into which it was not permitted to the Gentiles to enter, under pain of death. Josephus *Ant.* l. xv. § 5. St. Paul was seized upon the charge of having brought Gentiles into the inner court, Acts xxi. 28. I adopt the punctuation of Griesbach and Wakefield.

⁷ *In his own person abolished the law.*] Gr. "in his own flesh," *i. e.* by his death he introduced another dispensation, which superseded the dispensation of rites and ceremonies, the observance of which ceased to be necessary as an introduction to the kingdom of God. Mr. Locke here introduces a long note, to explain what is meant by the abolition of the law, justly observing, "that the law of Moses is no where abrogated by an actual repeal; but that by the introduction of the kingdom of the Messiah, which extended to the Gentiles, and proposed new terms of admission, it ceased to be the law of the people and kingdom of God, but not to be the law of the Jewish nation. This did not make its observances unlawful to those who, before conversion, were under the law; but that which was unlawful and contrary to the gospel was, the making those ritual observances necessary to be joined with faith in believers for justification."

⁸ *Ordinances.*] *δωγμασι*, "*edicta multas observationes reddunt necessarias.*" Rosenmuller; that is, the ceremonial law. The Jews insisted upon the strict observation of its rites as necessary to admission into covenant with God; while the Gentiles regarded them as an insupportable yoke. This difference produced an enmity between them, which could not be reconciled till the ceremonial law was abolished. "This law of ceremonies," says Dr. Chandler, "was properly the partition wall, which kept the Jews and Gentiles from coalescing or uniting into one church and people; from worshiping together, and partaking in common the privileges of God's house and service; and therefore our blessed Saviour, by taking down this partition wall, *i. e.* by cancelling the obligation of the Mosaic law, became our peace, and made both

Ch. II.
Ver. 15.

To accomplish this important purpose, of bringing Jews and Gentiles into the same state of privilege and promise, Jesus came as the ambassador of peace. And this great design he has actually fulfilled: having reconciled believers of both descriptions to each other, by putting an end to that which was the principal cause of enmity; namely, the law of ceremonies, which formerly constituted the proud distinction of the Jews. Jesus having ratified by his death a covenant which admits all believers to equal privileges, without arbitrary and positive marks of distinction, has, as it were, broken down that wall in the temple which separated the court of the Gentiles from that of the Jews; so that converted heathen may now approach as near to the holy place as converted Jews; and all who profess subjection to Christ as their Master are taught to regard each other as brethren in him.

15. *That he might form the two¹ into one new man in himself², thus making*
16. *peace³, and that he might reconcile both, in one person, to God⁴; having slain the enmity by the cross.*

Two purposes were to be accomplished by the abolition of the ceremonial law: the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles to each other, and to God. As to the first, it is so completely effected, that the great body of believers now forms one mystical person, of which Christ is the head; and of this

one; made both Jews and Gentiles equally the people of God, invested them with a right to the same privileges, enjoined them the same method of worship, gave them the same body of laws, and thus laid a foundation for their future union in the strictest bonds of affection and friendship."

¹ *Form the two.*] *κτίσθαι*, create, i. e. make, or form, see ver. 10, note.

² *In himself.*] i. e. "in his mystical body, the church." Newcome. The apostle delights in representing the universal church, consisting of believers, Jews and Gentiles, as forming one body, of which Christ is the head; and this body is sometimes called Christ, see Eph. i. 23. Mr. Locke observes, that the apostle "always has Jesus Christ in his mind as the head of the church, which was his body; from and by whom alone, by being united to him, the whole body, and every member of it, received life, vigour, and strength, and all the benefits of that state, which admirably well shows that whoever were united to this head must needs be united to one another; and also, that all the privileges and advantages they enjoyed were wholly owing to their union with, and adhering to, him their head; which were the two things he inculcated upon the converted Gentiles at Ephesus." He adds: "If the Jewish nation had owned Jesus as the Messiah, they had continued the people of God: but, as they had nationally rejected him, they were no longer such; and all who after that would return to their allegiance, must be admitted upon other terms than being the posterity of Jacob."

³ *Making peace,*] by making them members of the same body, all harmonizing with each other.

⁴ *To God, having slain the enmity by the cross.*] I follow the reading and the punctuation of the Syriac and Mr. Wakefield. *The enmity slain by the cross* is the ceremonial law, which was the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile. This being now abolished, and the two parties being now formed and moulded into one mystical body, of which Christ is the head, this new man is admitted into favour with God, and taken into a covenant state, not in consequence of any satisfaction made to offended justice, but from free, unpurchased, unmerited mercy. See ver. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith, and this salvation is the free gift of God.' This is plainly the train of the apostle's ideas,

body the several parts and limbs, in their respective places, live and act together in perfect harmony. This mystical person, consisting of Jesus and his faithful disciples of all nations and parties, is reconciled and consecrated to God, not by any formal initiatory rite, or ceremonial institute, but by the death of Christ, which abolishes all those legal distinctions which heretofore constituted ceremonial disqualifications, and barred the gates of the temple against the admission of the Gentiles.

Ch. II.
Ver. 16.

And he came⁵, and proclaimed the glad tidings of peace to you who were afar off, and to those that were near⁶. For through him we both have admission⁷, by one spirit⁸, to the Father.

17.

18.

Having thus superseded the ceremonial law, which was the cause of alienation from God, and from each other, he came after he was risen from the dead, and by himself in person, and still more explicitly by his apostles and other chosen messengers, to announce the joyful tidings of peace and reconciliation. To you Gentiles, who worshiped in the outer court, he has proclaimed liberty of access to the holy place, and the removal of whatever prevented your admission into the rank and privileges of the people of God. To the Jews he has announced a new and better covenant, which makes provision for the remission of offences which the law condemned without mercy. And thus, through this highly favoured messenger of peace, Jesus Christ, we all, both Jews and Gentiles, are admitted into the temple of God; we are allowed to invoke God as our Father, and to expect a glorious inheritance from him; of which the miraculous gifts and powers which are communicated alike to believers of every nation, are a convincing proof, and a most satisfactory earnest and pledge.

4. Being thus incorporated with the people of God, they are dedicated to his service, being made constituent parts of an ever-increasing temple, consecrated to God, and inhabited by him, ver. 19—22.

So then, ye are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and belonging to the house of God⁹.

19.

⁵ *He came.*] Newcome joins this with ver. 14, including the 15th and 16th in a parenthesis. Christ came to proclaim these tidings, after his resurrection, by his apostles and prophets, ver. 20.

⁶ *To you who were afar off, &c.*] *q. d.* to you Gentiles who were in the outer court, and to the Jews who were in the inner court of the temple, see ver. 13, note.

⁷ *Admission.*] An allusion to the custom of appointing persons to introduce strangers at the courts of princes. See Doddridge and Macknight.

⁸ *By one spirit.*] “The extraordinary gifts of the spirit were the evidence of their adoption,

Ch. II.
Ver. 19.

From this view which I have given you of the means by which reconciliation has been accomplished by Christ, you may draw the joyful conclusion that you Gentiles are no longer considered as foreigners and sojourners, who have no title to the privileges and immunities of the holy city, the community of the chosen people of God; but that, by your profession of faith in Christ, without submitting to the yoke of the ritual law, you are entitled to all the privileges which any of the professing people of God have ever enjoyed. You are free citizens of the kingdom of Christ; you are admitted into the house of God; you are suffered to enter as worshipers into the holy place; you are received into his service; you are acknowledged as his children.

20. *Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets¹, Jesus*
21. *Christ himself being the chief corner-stone². By which the whole building,*
being harmoniously framed together³, groweth⁴ to a holy temple through

and were poured out upon the Gentiles as well as upon the Jews." Chandler. One and the same spirit is communicated to all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile.

⁹ *Belonging to the house of God.*] The word *οἰκεῖσιν* signifies either belonging to a family as members or servants, Gal. vi. 10; or belonging to the building as a constituent part of it. The apostle glances at both these senses of the word, and passes off to another similitude. See Macknight. "The church of God (says Dr. Chandler) is compared to a city or republic, which hath its peculiar immunities, rights, and privileges; and of this city all who believe in Christ are equally free, of whatsoever nation or country they may be. They are no more *παροῖκοι*, i. e. mere dwellers or lodgers in a city, without enjoying the freedom of it, but the proper denizens of it, yea, such as belong to the very house and family of God, the universal Lord and Father. The word *οἰκεῖσιν* is used in both senses, to denote a domestic, or one who is a free-man, in opposition to a stranger or foreigner."

¹ *Apostles and prophets.*] "of the Christian church." Newcome. See ch. iii. 5, iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 28. *built upon, &c.* "since that gospel which they preach they received by immediate revelation from Christ." Chandler.

² *Corner-stone.*] "The chief corner-stone is that which is laid at the foundation, upon which the whole angle of the building rests; and which, therefore, is the principal support and tie of the whole edifice." Chandler. See Psalm cxviii. 22.

³ *Harmoniously framed together.*] "The materials of a building in their original form (says Dr. Chandler in his beautiful note) are shapeless and disagreeing, and could never constitute an edifice till wrought and fashioned by the art and labour of the workmen, fitted in size and shape for their proper places. And what more unlikely than that Jews and Gentiles should ever be brought to coalesce and join in one society, and constitute one church, between whom there had been so long and inveterate an opposition and hatred? But in Christ they were fitly framed. His gospel, and doctrine, and spirit, so altered and fashioned them, that they became capable of settling and joining together, and in their several places contributing to the proportion, harmony, strength, and beauty of this sacred temple which it pleased God to erect out of them. Notwithstanding the enmity of their former state, and though they would willingly have destroyed each other, yet, under the power and skill of the Redeemer, they arose upon him as their proper foundation, out of their common ruins, a regular and stately temple, consecrated to God, and honoured with his presence."

Archbishop Newcome and others have observed that "the temple of Diana, at Ephesus, made this allegory a most pertinent one." But I confess that I see nothing in the allegory peculiarly appropriate to that celebrated temple. The apostle, upon other occasions, 1 Cor. iii. 11, 12, 16, 17, has compared the church to a temple, where it is not suspected that he had any particular temple in view. Nor would the temple of Diana have been thought on here, had it not been first presumed that the epistle was addressed to the Ephesians. And this allu-

the Lord⁵: by which⁶ ye also are built together for a habitation of God, through the spirit⁷. Ch. II. Ver. 22.

I said that you belonged to the house of God: you do belong to it as members of his family; you also belong to it as constituent parts of that holy building the church. As such, you rest upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; your faith being erected upon the doctrine which the authorized teachers of the gospel have taught and inculcated, and upon the evidence which they exhibited of the truth of their doctrine. But your principal dependance is upon the testimony of Jesus himself, the chief of all the prophets of the Most High. He is the solid foundation and the chief corner-stone of this spiritual temple, which unites and firmly binds together different parts of the building. He is the great bond of union to the universal church. Resting upon this foundation, the united building rises by the continual accession of fresh materials, of new converts, to a harmonious and magnificent temple, constructed by the Lord, and consecrated to him. Upon this foundation you rest secure; and, firmly united with the great body of true believers of all nations, you constitute a glorious fabric, the universal church, in which God has fixed his permanent residence, as he once did in the most holy place; and where he manifests his presence, by the gifts of his holy spirit, in a manner more truly honourable and beneficial than the cloud of glory upon the mercy-seat.

SECTION IV.

THE APOSTLE prays to God for the establishment of his Christian friends in the faith of Christ; and in a pertinent and eloquent digression he obviates the objections which would naturally occur from the consideration of his own sufferings in the cause. Ch. iii. throughout. Ch. III.

1. He announces himself as a prisoner of Christ, for their sake, ver. 1.

sion, if it were more direct than it is, would be of no avail in opposition to the many strong objections against that hypothesis, and particularly that from the apostle making no allusion to any of the memorable events which occurred to him at Ephesus, or even, to his having ever visited Ephesus at all.

⁴ *Groweth.*] "is gradually increasing by the addition of new members." Macknight.

⁵ *Through the Lord.*] "under the inspection of, and sacred to, the Lord." Chandler.

⁶ *By which.*] i. e. "corner-stone." Newcome, Wakefield.

⁷ *Habitation of God.*] "God dwells in you by those extraordinary gifts of his holy spirit

Ch. III.
Ver. 1.

*For this cause*¹ *I, Paul, the prisoner*² *of Christ Jesus, for the sake of you Gentiles*³.

Having thus reminded you of your great privilege of admission into the kingdom and family of God, (ch. ii. 19,) I, Paul, whom you know by name and character, and many of you in person, who, in the introduction of this epistle, announced myself as the apostle of Christ, and who now am also a prisoner at Rome; not for any wrong that I have done, but for having taught the doctrine of Christ; and particularly for having executed his gracious commission with which I was intrusted for the benefit of you, the converted Gentiles—I, therefore, being now a prisoner for his sake and for yours, commend you to the divine blessing.

2. The apostle, recollecting himself, stops to obviate any unfavourable impression which might be occasioned by the circumstance of his being at that time a prisoner, ver. 2—13.

1.) He expatiates upon the important communication which had been made to him and others of the gracious design of divine Providence in the conversion of the heathen, ver. 2—6.

2. *Inasmuch*⁴ *as ye have heard*⁵ *of the dispensation*⁶ *of the grace of God, which has been granted to me concerning you.*

which is the sure evidence of his acceptance and immediate presence." Chandler.—"a spiritual habitation of God." Wakefield.

¹ *For this cause.*] "Because ye are admitted into the outward privileges of the gospel, ch. ii. 19. I pray that ye may be strengthened in it, ver. 16, &c. This verse is connected with ver. 14, where *ταυτα χαριν* is resumed; St. Paul having dropped his first thought, and pursued others which arose in his mind." Newcome.

² *A prisoner.*] Grotius, Chandler, Wakefield, and many others, read, "I, Paul, *am* a prisoner," and thus avoid the parenthesis. With Archbishop Newcome, and most others, I include the twelve verses following in a parenthesis; and think that the apostle takes up his expressions again ver. 14. This is, indeed, more obscure, but more agreeable to his usual style of writing; in which he frequently digresses to pursue incidental thoughts, which, however, are generally closely connected with the subject. A remarkable instance of this occurs 1 Cor. ix. x.

³ *For the sake of you Gentiles.*] The apostle's long imprisonment, first at Cesarea, and afterwards at Rome, was, strictly speaking, owing to his public declaration, Acts xxii. 21, that he had received a divine commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The historian remarks, ver. 22, "they gave him audience to this word, and then lift up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live." It was in consequence of the riot thus excited, that the chief captain ordered him to be arrested and brought into the castle. The exact, but undesigned coincidence between the epistle and the history is a considerable presumptive evidence of the genuineness and credibility of both. See this argument beautifully and conclusively illustrated in Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, ch. viii. no. 1.

⁴ *Inasmuch.*] With Newcome, Bowyer, &c., I include in a parenthesis ver. 2—13. Some, not without plausible reason, suppose the parenthesis extended through the chapter.

⁵ *As ye have heard.*] *ειπε ηκουσατε.* Dr. Mill, Mr. Evanson, and others, infer from the expression "if that you have heard," that the epistle was not addressed to the Ephesians, but to some persons who had never seen the apostle. It has, however, been argued that the

Ch. III.
Ver. 2.

I am, my brethren, indeed suffering for my exertions in your cause, and for the zeal with which, in the face of my bigoted countrymen, I announced the commission with which I was charged to preach the gospel to you (see Acts xxii. 21). And this circumstance may possibly alarm and intimidate some of you: but I assure you that you have no reason at all to be disquieted on that account; for, when duly considered, my long imprisonment is more a subject of congratulation than uneasiness. For, though some of you may not know my person, you cannot fail to have heard much of that extraordinary commission with which I have been honoured by God to publish the designs of his great wisdom and goodness towards you.

That by revelation⁷ that mystery⁸ was made known to me (as I have written before briefly⁹; by reading which ye will be able to perceive my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other generations was not made known¹⁰ to the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets¹¹ by the spirit.

3.

4.

5.

What I allude to is the discovery which God has been pleased to make to me in particular of a dispensation, the full import of which has hitherto been

word *εἰς* does not express uncertainty, but may be rendered *si quidem*, seeing that, inasmuch as. See Locke, Whitby, Newcome, and Chandler. 2 Cor. v. 2; Eph. iv. 21. "*Εἰς magis est confidentis quam dubitantis.*" Hoogeveen. Nevertheless, I cannot help thinking with Mr. Evanson, that after the apostle had visited Ephesus twice, and had at one time spent almost three years amongst them, Acts xx. 31, it is very extraordinary that he should address the Ephesians only as having heard that the dispensation of the gospel to the Gentiles had been committed to him, and should refer them to the former part of his epistle, that they might, when they had read it, perceive his knowledge of the mystery of Christ. These considerations appear to me conclusive against the epistle being inscribed to the Ephesians; but I cannot coincide with the learned and acute writer, that they prove the epistle not to have been written by Paul. See Evanson's *Dissonance of the Evangelists*, p. 261, 262.

⁶ *Dispensation of grace.*] "This dispensation," says Dr. Chandler, "seems to be that particular office in the Christian church to which this apostle was immediately called; and he styles it a dispensation of grace, because it was a great honour and signal favour conferred upon him, and because the design of it was extremely beneficial and favourable to the Gentiles." The apostle often speaks of the gospel as *χαρις*, a free gift, Rom. vi. 15, and of his own apostleship as *χαρις*, an unmerited favour, Rom. i. 5, Eph. iii. 8.

⁷ *By revelation.*] "by the teaching of God himself. See Gal. i. 12." Newcome.

⁸ *Mystery.*] the call of the Gentiles. See ver. 6.

⁹ *Written before.*] in this epistle. See ch. i. 4—10, ii. 13—21. *εν ολιγω*, in brief. Worsley.

¹⁰ *Not made known.*] "The calling of the Gentiles to be the people of God was frequently foretold by the prophets under the Old Testament; but yet it does not seem to have been expressly asserted by any of them that they should become God's people by faith only, without conformity to the law of Moses. The calling of the Gentiles in this manner was the grand secret of God's counsel and providence, which former ages knew nothing of in comparison with that clearness with which God was pleased to discover to the apostles and prophets under the New Testament." See Chandler. Comp. Rom. xvi. 25, 26, xiv. 24, 25. Newcome.

¹¹ *Prophets.*] i. e. authorized teachers of the gospel. See Eph. ii. 20; 1 Cor. xii. xiv. All inspired or duly authorized teachers are called prophets, though they did not foretell future events.

Ch. III.
Ver. 5.

a secret and a mystery that was known to none but God himself. This mystery communicated to me I have in the former part of this epistle disclosed to you, not indeed insisting upon it to that extent which mercy so rich, so unmerited, and so unexpected, deserves. Nevertheless, if you will take the trouble to review what I have written, you will find that it comprehends a new and glorious discovery of truths the most interesting and important relative to the doctrine of Christ. And though it was hinted at occasionally and obscurely by the holy prophets of former ages, it was never so fully revealed to the servants and messengers of God in past generations, as it is now revealed and confirmed, by the communications of the holy spirit, to the apostles of Christ, and to the authorized teachers of his doctrine.

6. *That the Gentiles through the gospel¹ are co-heirs with the Israelites, incorporated with them, and joint partakers of the promise in Christ².*

Need I mention, that the glorious and interesting truth so long concealed in the eternal councils of heaven, and now first made known, to the joy and astonishment of all who possess the generous sentiments of the gospel, is this? That the Gentiles are no longer to be regarded as aliens and enemies, nor even as inferiors, in the same community, but that under the gospel dispensation, and believing in Christ, they are admitted to a full equality with the ancient people of God. They become, together with believing Jews, sons of God and co-heirs of the divine inheritance of eternal life; they are incorporated in the same privileged community, and equally with the descendants of Abraham they participate in all the blessings and promises of the gospel.

2.) Of these joyful tidings it was the apostle's honour and happiness to be appointed a herald, ver. 7—9.

7. *Of which I have been made a minister, by the gracious gift³ of God bestowed upon me according to the energy of his power⁴.*

¹ *Through the gospel.*] Locke says, "in the time of the gospel:" rather, by faith in the gospel. "by the preaching of the gospel." Newcome.—This is the mystery now fully revealed, that believing Gentiles should be upon an equal footing with believing Jews, "joint heirs, a joint-body, and joint partakers of his promise in Christ." Newcome.

² *The promise in Christ.*] "of which Christ was the object." Newcome. The received text reads, *his promise*; which is not supported by the best copies. See Griesbach.

³ *The gracious gift of God.*] Gr. "the gift of the grace or favour of God. See ver. 2. "Of which great and merciful dispensation God has made me a minister, and qualified me for preaching and demonstrating the truth of it, by the powers of his holy spirit conferred upon me." Pyle.—"The apostle unquestionably refers in these words," says Dr. Chandler, "to the extraordinary manner in which he was called to, and fitted for, the work and office of an apostle."

⁴ *Energy of his power.*] "Paul's conversion to the Christian faith was purely miraculous,

This glorious intelligence I am appointed to communicate. Not that I was myself a candidate for the honourable office: far from it. This great favour was the free unsolicited gift of God to me, and his mighty energy qualified me for the work. Nothing but omnipotence could have subdued my inveterate prejudices, or have imparted those dispositions and qualifications which were requisite to my success. Ch. III.
Ver. 7.

Upon me, who am less than the least⁵ of all saints, this favour hath been bestowed, to proclaim⁶ among the Gentiles the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches⁷ of Christ. 8.

I cannot express the astonishment and the gratitude that I feel at the high honour that has been conferred upon me. When I call to mind what I formerly was, a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, I can hardly believe that I am permitted to enter into this holy community. I am unworthy of the lowest place, of the meanest office, in the church of God; and yet to me, even to me, the most unworthy of the servants of God, is this high distinction granted, to be the herald of eternal truth, to proclaim to the ignorant, deluded, despised Gentiles the joyful tidings of inestimable blessings by Jesus Christ, freely offered to those who could never have expected them, and who indeed were not sufficiently apprized of their poverty and wretchedness to have sought after them.

And to manifest clearly unto all that mysterious dispensation⁸ which was concealed from the past ages in God, who hath created all these things⁹. 9.

and his knowledge of the gospel the effect of immediate inspiration." Chandler. See Gal. ii. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10; and Locke on the text.

⁵ *Less than the least.*] Dr. Doddridge says, "It has often been observed, that the apostle here makes a new word, ελαχιστοτέρω, the comparative degree of the superlative, which no translation can fully equal or happily express. No doubt he refers to what he had been formerly, when he persecuted the church of God." See 1 Cor. xv. 9; 1 Tim. i. 13. "The original word," says Dr. Chandler, "is excellently well rendered by our translators. The apostle does not content himself with saying that he was the least of all saints, but his humility goes yet lower, and he styles himself 'less than the least.' Such diminutive forms of expression are used by the best writers."

⁶ *Proclaim, &c.*] This is the spirited and just translation of Mr. Wakefield.

⁷ *Unsearchable riches.*] Dr. Doddridge remarks in this and the following verse an allusion to concealed treasure. Dr. Chandler supposes that the apostle alludes in this paragraph to the officers of the temple of Diana at Ephesus; but the resemblance does not appear to be very striking.

⁸ *Mysterious dispensation.*] Most of the ancient manuscripts and versions read οἰκονομία, dispensation, instead of κοινωνία, fellowship; and this reading is adopted by Griesbach, Wakefield, and Newcome. "The dispensation of the mystery," or, "the mysterious dispensation," is that dispensation which was formerly a mystery.

⁹ *All these things:*] i. e. who has introduced this happy change of state in the moral world. The

Ch. III.
Ver. 9.

To me it has been granted to discover and make known this hidden treasure; to publish to the world this new and glorious dispensation, which was lately an unfathomable mystery, concealed in the eternal councils of God, from wise and good men in past ages and under former dispensations; and now in its proper season revealed by him whose wise and powerful providence has introduced this new and happy state of things.

3.) The consequence of the apostle's preaching was the manifestation of the wisdom of God in the gospel dispensation through the medium of the church, ver. 10—12.

10. *So that¹ the manifold variety of the wisdom of God² is now³ made known through the church⁴ to the principalities and powers in heavenly places⁵:*

The words "by Jesus Christ" are probably spurious, being omitted in many of the most ancient manuscripts and versions, though capable of a very good sense, as the new creation alone is spoken of by the apostle in this passage. Archbishop Newcome observes "that the sense most suitable to the place is this, 'who hath created all things, that is, Jews and Gentiles, anew to holiness of life.'" See ch. ii. 10, 15, iv. 24. How very precarious the argument is which is drawn from this text in favour of the pre-existence of Christ, and that he is the creator of all things, is obvious to every intelligent and impartial reader. See Tyrwhit *On the Creation of all Things by Jesus Christ*.

¹ *So that.*] Whitby observes that *iva* may here signify *adeo ut*.

² *Manifold variety of the wisdom of God.*] *πολυποικιλος*. See Wakefield. "Now that the uncircumcised Gentiles believe in Christ, and are by baptism admitted into the church, the wisdom of God is made known to the Jews, not to be tied up to one invariable way and form, as they persuade themselves, but displays itself in sundry manners as he thinks fit." Locke.

³ *Now.*] "This word affords a presumptive argument that a recent creation is spoken of in the foregoing verse." Newcome.

⁴ *Made known through the church.*] The existence of the Christian community, formed by the apostle's ministry, and acknowledged by God as his through the gifts of the spirit, constitutes a proof which the scribes and priests and ministers of the Jewish dispensation could not object to or repel, that the wisdom of God had other ways of reconciling sinners to himself, and of bringing the Gentiles into the church, than submission to the Mosaic institute.

"The Jews, and most even of the converted Jews, would not believe that the converted Gentiles were admitted without submitting to the laws and ceremonies of the Jews. Now, says St. Paul, God of his special grace has commissioned me to preach to the world this his hidden purpose of taking the Gentiles into the kingdom of his son, that so by the church consisting of members who are God's people, without being circumcised or observing the other Mosaic rites, might, which the Jews could by no means conceive, now be made known and declared, to the leaders and chiefs of that nation, the manifold wisdom of God, which is not, as the Jews imagine, tied up to their own way, but can bring about his purposes by sundry manners, and in ways that they thought not of." Locke.

⁵ *Principalities and powers in heavenly places.*] The ANGELS, 1 Pet. i. 12. Newcome, Chandler, &c. "not only governors and magistrates of this world, but all ranks and degrees of creatures in heaven and earth." Pyle; who observes upon ch. i. 10, that "*heaven and earth* are sometimes a Jewish phrase to express *the whole world*; but they seem in these epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, with relation to Christ's government, to include the angels and heavenly spirits along with mankind."

But it is hard to say, what could be the use of communicating by revelation any thing which passes in the world of spirits, even supposing such a world to exist, and to be informed of what is going on upon the earth. And if, with Mr. Locke, we understand *heaven and earth* as ex-

according to the predisposition of the ages⁶ which he made in respect to Jesus Christ our Lord⁷.

Ch. III.
Ver. 11.

In consequence of this manifestation of God's gracious, and heretofore unknown counsels of mercy to mankind, a church has now been gathered in the world, which God acknowledges as his peculiar people by the gifts of his holy spirit: a proof which none can call in question. And this church, thus endowed, manifests beyond all contradiction, and that to those who are most averse to believe, even to the priests and rulers of the Jewish dispensation, that the wisdom of God is not limited in its mode of operation; and that compliance with the law of Moses, in all its pompous and burdensome ceremonial, is not the only way of admitting sinners and outcasts into the bond of his covenant, and to the privileges of his peculiar people. And this new and happy state of things is not owing to any late change in the divine counsels, for all the various portions of this magnificent design take place in regular succession, according to the plan originally formed in the divine mind; God having from the beginning determined that all the more imperfect and li-

pressing Jews and Gentiles, those who are in, and those who are out of, covenant. It is in strict analogy with this figure to interpret *principalities and powers* as expressing the officers and ministers of the Jewish church. This is the explanation which Mr. Locke himself gives in a judicious and modest note upon this text, which, however, he professes that he "does not fully understand." After having observed, that it is not easy to conceive that the commission given to St. Paul was for the instruction of angels, and that heathen magistrates gave themselves no concern about it, he adds, "I dare not be positive, but I should take this to be the meaning of it. The high priests, scribes, and pharisees, who alone pretend to any authority in these matters, deny the converted heathen to be the people of God, because they neglect the law and circumcision, and those other rites whereby God has appointed those who are his people to be separated from the rest of the world and made holy to himself. Now, says St. Paul, God has commissioned me to preach his purpose of taking the Gentiles into the kingdom of his Son; that so, by the church, consisting of members who are God's people without being circumcised, might be declared to the leaders and chiefs of that nation the manifold wisdom of God; which is not, as the Jews imagine, tied up to their own ways, but can bring about his purposes by sundry manners, and in ways which they thought not of. And thus, by the church, is this mystery now made known to *principalities and powers*, i. e. to the rulers and teachers of the Jewish nation."

⁶ *According to the predisposition of the ages.*] So Wakefield, Locke, &c. *κατα προθεσιν των αιωνων*. "The word *προθεσις*," says Dr. Chandler, "properly signifies the disposition which a person makes of any thing either in his intention or conduct. The literal translation of the Greek words is not, as in our version, *according to his eternal purpose*, the word *his* not being in the original, but *according to the disposition of ages which he made in or by Christ.*"

⁷ *In respect to Jesus Christ.*] *εν Χριστω*, "for the coming of Christ." Macknight; who observes, that *αιων* is a word of various signification. Here it denotes the dispensations of religion under which mankind have been placed, the *patriarchal*, the *Mosaic*, the *Christian*. All these ages or dispensations the apostle says God planned and brought to pass for the sake of Christ Jesus, to prepare mankind for his reception." Dr. Chandler refers to Heb. i. 2, which he renders, *for whose sake, or, upon whose account, he made even the ages, as illustrating this text: "all which dispensations had a reference to Christ, and led on to the accomplishment of the divine purposes of mercy to mankind."*

Ch. III. mited revelations of his will under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations,
Ver. 11. should be made subservient to the great and final plan of universal redemption by Jesus Christ.

12. *By whom we have this freedom of speech, and access with confidence through faith in him*¹.

And it is by the dispensation introduced by Christ which has now superseded all others, that we all, whether Jews or Gentiles, are encouraged to address ourselves to God as our God and Father; and by the profession of faith in Christ, and by this alone, without any ceremonial observances whatsoever, we are initiated into our present happy state of privilege, and joyful expectation.

4.) The apostle concludes his digression with a request to his friends not to be discouraged by his sufferings for their sake, ver. 13.

13. *Wherefore, I entreat that ye faint not*² *at my afflictions for you, which are your glory*³.

Since, therefore, I esteem it so great an honour to be employed in the promulgation of the gospel to the Gentiles, notwithstanding all the persecutions that I endure, and since I have exhibited such decisive evidence of the commission which I have received for this purpose, let not the imprisonment which I suffer, and the hardships which I so cheerfully undergo, diminish your regard either to me or to my doctrine. It is for your sake that I am in bonds; it is your honour to be benefited by the instructions of a teacher who is ready to attest the truth of his doctrine by his sufferings; and it will be much to your commendation to adhere to such a doctrine, and to such a teacher, in circumstances so difficult and perilous.

¹ *Faith in him.*] *πιστις αυτου*, faith of him. "The genitive case of the object, as well as of the agent, is so frequent in the sacred scriptures, that there needs nothing to be said of it." Locke.

² *Ye faint not, &c.*] Mr. Wakefield, with the Syriac version, renders the text, "I pray that I may not faint." The original is ambiguous; but the common interpretation appears preferable, because it is more probable that new converts would be discouraged by the apostle's persecutions than the apostle himself.

³ *Your glory.*] Dr. Chandler observes, that the pronoun *which* may either be referred to the whole sentence, and then the meaning will be, that Your not being disheartened will be your glory; or it may refer only to the apostle's sufferings, and then the sense will be, My afflictions are your glory, as I am hereby enabled to give you an example of fortitude, and a proof that I know the truth of my doctrine. He adds: "both senses are so good that I know not which of them to prefer." Archbishop Newcome remarks, that the language seems to show that a personal regard subsisted between the writer of this epistle and those to whom it is addressed. See ch. vi. 22. He refers for the use of *ητις* to Phil. i. 28.

3. The apostle, resuming his subject, prays for the establishment and perseverance of his Christian friends, and that they may be duly sensible of the inestimable value of the gospel, ver. 14—19. Ch. III.

For this cause⁴ I bend my knees to the Father⁵, by whose name the whole family⁶ in heaven and upon earth is called. Ver. 14,
15.

To return, then, to the subject of your admission to the privileges of the gospel, from which the astonishment and gratitude which I always feel at the recollection of my being employed on this glorious errand, and the fear lest you should be intimidated by my sufferings, has tempted me so far to digress : When I call to mind the rich, and free, and unsolicited mercy of God, in bringing you idolatrous Gentiles within the inclosure of the church, I humbly offer my most fervent prayer to that venerable Being, who is the great universal Parent, and who, more especially, owns the character of the Father of the whole family of believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether antecedently to their conversion to the faith, they had, or had not, been subject to the Mosaic ritual : all being now equally acknowledged as his children, and equally the objects of his paternal love,

That he would grant you, according to his glorious riches⁷, that ye may be strengthened with power, by his spirit⁸, in the inward man⁹ : 16.

⁴ *For this cause.*] The apostle here resumes the sentence begun ver. 1. See the note on that verse.

⁵ *Father.*] With Mr. Wakefield, upon the authority of the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, and some ancient versions, I omit the words “ of our Lord Jesus Christ,” which make the sense ambiguous, and which seem to have been added by some officious scribe, or taken in from a marginal note. Archbishop Newcome has marked them as doubtful.

⁶ *The whole family.*] Archbishop Newcome remarks, that the word *πατρια*, ver. 15, has a reference to *πατερα*, ver. 14. By the family “ in heaven and earth,” is commonly understood angels and men. Mr. Locke interprets it, “ of Jesus Christ, who is already in heaven, and believers, who are still on earth.” But I see no reason in this text to recede from Mr. Locke’s own former explanation of the words *heaven and earth*, as signifying Jew and Gentile. Mr. Locke himself indeed, in his note upon ch. i. 10, gives it as his opinion, that the family in heaven and earth in this text (iii. 15) signifies “ the united body of Christians, made up of Jews and Gentiles.” I see no allusion here to the goddess Diana, which Dr. Chandler supposes, who remarks, that “ she was the common goddess of the Asiatic cities. All Asia worshiped her, Acts xix. 27 : which was therefore strictly and properly her family.” But who would have thought of such an allusion if they had not pre-supposed that this epistle had been written to the Ephesians ?

⁷ *Glorious riches.*] “ his abundant and glorious power.” Chandler.—“ the great glory he designed to you Gentiles. See Col. i. 27 ; Eph. i. 17.” Locke.—“ The glorious abundance of good things, and especially of spiritual endowments, which he can impart.” Newcome.

⁸ *Power by his spirit.*] “ strengthened with might, i. e. mightily strengthened, that God would give them mighty courage. *By his spirit.* The extraordinary gifts of the spirit were the great means of confirmation and establishment.” Dr. Chandler ; who thinks that by *spirit* here may also be intended “ the ordinary influences of the power and grace of God.”

⁹ *Inward man.*] “ the mind and spirit (Rom. vii. 22 ; 2 Cor. iv. 16), of which the body is only the outward clothing and habitation.” Chandler.

Ch. III.
Ver. 16.

The favour which I request for you is, that our benevolent and gracious Father, in conformity to the wonderful purposes of his love to you converted Gentiles, would, by the energy of his spirit so copiously diffused among you, enlighten your understandings, establish your faith, fix your resolution, and confirm your courage.

17. *That Christ may dwell¹ in your hearts by faith.*

That you may be sincere, judicious, established, and practical believers in the Christian doctrine.

18. *So that being rooted² and founded in love³, ye may be able to comprehend*

19. *with all the saints, the breadth and length, and depth and height⁴, and to know the exceeding love of the knowledge of Christ⁵, so that ye may be filled to all the fulness of God⁶.*

¹ *That Christ may dwell.*] Dr. Chandler here supposes an allusion to the temple of Diana, in which the goddess was supposed to reside. This is upon the hypothesis that the epistle is addressed to the Ephesians; which appears to me, for reasons before assigned, in the highest degree improbable. All these fanciful allusions, therefore, in the illustration of which so much learning and ingenuity are displayed, fall to the ground; nor, in truth, are the allusions to temples and buildings in this epistle at all more frequent, or appropriate, than in the other epistles of the same apostle. See 1 Cor. iii. 10, &c.

² *Rooted, &c.*] “Grotius observes that there is a trajection in *ἵνα*, as John xiii. 29, 1 Cor. ix. 15. The original runs, *being rooted, &c.*, so that ye may be able, &c.; and Bengelius removes the comma or colon from *τεθεμελιωμένοι.*” Newcome.

³ *Founded in love.*] Archbishop Newcome justly observes, that “the apostle here uses a figure taken from architecture;” but there is no occasion to suppose, with the learned prelate, any particular allusion to the temple of Diana; though Dr. Chandler “thinks that this verse is in every word almost a remarkable and beautiful allusion to Diana’s temple at Ephesus;” but he acknowledges that “it is not taken any notice of by any interpreter that he has seen.”

⁴ *The breadth and length, &c.*] Dr. Chandler applies this description to “the spiritual temple, the Christian church, whose breadth and length extend as wide as the universe, and whose depth and height reach from earth to heaven, comprehending believers of all nations; also angels as well as men.” Archbishop Newcome observes that “the words are applied to the mystery of calling the Gentiles, in all its consequences here and hereafter;” and accordingly translates, *the height of this mystery.*

⁵ *Exceeding love of the knowledge of Christ.*] I adopt the reading of the Alexandrine manuscript, *ἀγαπὴν τῆς γνώσεως*, and take the words in Mr. Locke’s sense, “to understand the exceeding love of God in bringing us to the knowledge of Christ.” The apostle prays, that the Christians to whom he writes may see the great love of God, in contriving, executing and publishing the scheme of the gospel; in the firmness of the foundation, and in the vast extent, the grandeur and beauty of the superstructure, capable of containing all the people of God in all ages: that, possessing a complete view of this magnificent design, they may be filled to all the fulness of God.

Grotius also adopts the Alexandrine reading, which he says was Jerome’s; and he explains it, “*summam illam dilectionem Dei scilicet et proximi, quæ ex cognitione Christi oritur.*” Bishop Pearce, in his *Epistolæ Duæ* (Works, vol. ii. p. 476) quoted by Bowyer, observes that the sense of ver. 18 is imperfect for want of a genitive, and that a genitive after *ὑπερᾶλλυσαν* is scarcely Greek; he proposes, therefore, to place *τῆς γνώσεως* after *ὑψος*, which will make both the sense and the construction clear: *q. d.* “that ye may be able to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height of this knowledge, and to know the surpassing love of Christ.” This is a very judicious correction of the text; and, though only conjectural, it is by no means improbable.

Castalio’s

And being established in faith, I pray that you may also be established in love; and to this end, that you may be enabled to form a just conception of the love of God as manifested in the gospel of Jesus. It is indeed, my brethren, a scheme replete with the purest, richest love to guilty, perishing mankind. The gospel dispensation is a magnificent temple: its foundations are in the centre of the earth; its summit pierces the clouds; its circumference is sufficiently ample to include the whole human race, both Jew and Gentile; it is graced with the presence of God, who there delights to manifest the glory of his mercy through Jesus the High Priest of our profession. May you all take your proper stations in this sacred inclosure; and, with true believers of every name, may you behold, with heartfelt pleasure, the unlimited dimensions of this stupendous fabric; and remark, with generous delight, the unspeakable love of God, through Christ, in the admission of believers into the church, without distinction of Jew or Gentile! So that, when you contemplate this great work from beginning to end, both in its design and in its execution, you may be filled with admiration and delight, in the view of a scheme so complete in all its parts, so worthy of its divine contriver, so honourable to God, so beneficial to men⁷.

Ch. III.
Ver. 19.

4. The apostle concludes his prayer and the doctrinal part of his epistle with a suitable doxology, ver. 20, 21.

Castalio's version is, "*ut cognoscere valeatis quàm omnem cognitionem excedat amor Christi*," 'that ye may know how far the love of Christ excels all knowledge.' Mr. Wakefield renders the passage thus: "and to understand (which is far better than that knowledge) the love of Christ, so as to be filled with all the fulness of God." Upon the whole, the Alexandrine reading and Mr. Locke's interpretation appear to me most suitable to the connexion, unless Bishop Pearce's conjectural emendation should be preferred.

⁶ Filled to all the fulness, &c.] ver. 18, that you may comprehend the height and depth, &c. ver. 19, that you may know the love of Christ, &c. (*ἵνα*), to the end that ye may be filled to, or with, all the fulness of God, i. e. that you may fully comprehend and gratefully acknowledge the complete scheme of divine mercy. "according to all the fulness of God." Worsley. Mr. Locke's interpretation is, "filled to that degree of fulness which is suitable to his purpose of munificence;" and "by the fulness of God he understands such a fulness as God is wont to bestow. *παν το πληρωμα* means, that there is not a fulness of one thing and emptiness of another, but a fulness of all necessary gifts." This is the interpretation generally received. So Grotius, "*ut impleamini omnibus illis donis quibus Deus implere homines solet*."

⁷ If we admit the emendation of Bishop Pearce, which is, to say the least, very plausible, the paraphrase may perhaps stand thus:

q. d. that you, and all believers, may possess a comprehensive view of this knowledge: that you may see the vast extent of the scheme of the gospel; how admirably it is adapted, by the liberality of its terms, to include all the people of God, all the virtuous in all ages and countries—that you may form a just conception of the love of God in the mission of Jesus Christ, which so far surpasses all that could antecedently have been expected and imagined—and finally, that you may be filled to the full with admiration and gratitude at the glorious manifestation of the wisdom and goodness of God, in the dispensation of the gospel.

Ch. III.
Ver. 20.

- Now, unto Him who is able to do very abundantly above all which we ask or conceive¹, according to the power² which strongly worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church, in Christ Jesus³, throughout all the generations of this most excellent dispensation⁴. Amen.*

¹ *Ask or conceive.*] This is a most appropriate doxology. Neither the converted Gentiles nor the apostle himself would ever have thought of asking for that which was so graciously given to them, without any solicitation, or even wish, to obtain it.

² *According to the power.*] “i. e. according to the similitude of that power which worketh by the gifts of the spirit.” Newcome. That wonderful power which had been exerted in their conversion, and in the apostle’s mission, was a proof that God could do more and better than they could ask or think.

“This power was exerted,” says Dr. Chandler, “in their being quickened when dead in trespasses and sins, and recovered from the dominion of the powers of darkness; and in building them up to himself a church and people, that they might be to the praise of his glorious grace. Now the same power which they had already experienced in producing this wonderful change, a change which they neither asked nor thought of, was abundantly sufficient to confer on them as real and valuable blessings for the future, suitable to all their wants, far exceeding all their thoughts, and even greater than they themselves could ever directly ask for.”

³ *In the church in Christ Jesus.*] i. e. in the Christian church; to be in Christ is to be a believer in him. See Rom. xvi. 7. “To him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus. The great object of adoration, and the medium by which it should be offered, are here expressly and distinctly represented. The object is the Almighty Father; the person by and through whom, or in whose name, this glory and praise is to be offered, is Jesus Christ.” Chandler. Yet if this learned writer means that these words *by, or through, or in the name of Christ*, are required to be repeated at the close of every prayer, as though there was some mysterious efficacy in them, as is now usual, I do not see the necessity, or use, or scripture warrant, for such a custom. That we ought at all times to be ready to acknowledge that all we know of God, and of the most acceptable method of praying to him, is derived from the instructions of Christ, cannot be doubted. But the constant use of the name of Christ, as a sort of charm at the end of a prayer, seems unnecessary; and if introduced with a view to make the Father placable, it is blameable in the extreme.

⁴ *Throughout all the generations, &c.*] In the original, *εις πασας τας γενεας τε αιωνος των αιωνων* literally, *through all the generations of the age of ages*; which is generally understood as an emphatical expression of eternity. Archbishop Newcome renders it, “throughout all generations, for ever and ever.” Locke, with the public version, “throughout all ages, world without end.” Wakefield, “through the generations of eternity.” Priestley, “to the end of all time.” Doddridge, “through all the successions of an endless eternity.” —Dr. Chandler says, “the expression in Greek is so emphatical that it can scarce be rendered into English. ‘To all the generations of the age of ages,’ i. e. throughout all the successions of all possible ages.” Rosenmüller, after Grotius, “*Junctæ sunt duæ formulæ synonymæ Hebr.*” and adds, “*ut summa æternitas quanta mente quidem humana cogitari potest, exprimeretur.*”

With great deference to these learned expositors, I would submit that, as the doxology to be offered is that of *the church*, the duration expressed can extend no further than while the church continues; which, of course, is limited to the end of time, or of the Christian age or dispensation; and this is the natural and proper signification of the apostle’s words: viz. ‘to him be glory in the church, of or through Christ Jesus, through all the generations of this age of ages;’ or, agreeably to a familiar Hebrew idiom, ‘of this most excellent age or dispensation.’ Or if, with some good manuscripts, we drop *των αιωνων* (see Griesbach), the reading will be, ‘all the generations of this,’ i. e. ‘the Christian age,’ which appears to me to be clearly the apostle’s meaning.

Dr. Chandler explains the apostle’s rule, *q. d.* throughout all the successions of all possible ages glory must be ascribed to the Father by Christ. “I confess,” says he, “that the practice of the Christian church, for many ages, has superseded this command, though I do not find any

And now, my Christian friends, having thus surveyed the wonderful love of God, in contriving, in executing, and in completing the scheme of the gospel, and especially in the conversion and admission of the Gentiles, what can we do better than express our gratitude in devout thanksgiving? To Him, therefore, to that almighty and most merciful Being, who has in this illustrious manner demonstrated, that he is not only able but willing to confer benefits upon his ignorant, thoughtless, ruined creatures, far beyond all their prayers and desires, and even their conceptions, which kindness he has abundantly manifested in the powerful operation of his spirit in the conversion of you Gentiles, and in my own apostolical mission and success, neither of which could have been imagined, much less solicited by us; to that ever-blessed Being to whose great mercy we are all so deeply indebted, be ascribed, by the whole Christian church, throughout all the successive generations of this most excellent, and most benign, of all the moral dispensations of God to mankind, even to the end of time, all those high honours, and all that grateful homage, which are so justly due to him from all who have been enlightened, and sanctified, and saved by him. Amen.

Ch. III.
Ver. 21.

injunction or precedent in the New Testament for doing it; the apostolic example may and ought to be followed."

How far this apostolic precedent can be made consistent with the well known doxology, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end,' it behoves those who daily use this famous doxology, and impose it upon others, seriously to consider.

For the sense here given to the word *aiwy*, see ch. ii. 2—7; Matt. xxiv. 3; Heb. i. 2.

PART THE SECOND.

PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUDING SALUTATIONS. Ch. iv.—vi.

SECTION I.

Ch. IV. *EXHORTATIONS to the practice of personal and social virtue, and Cautions against relapsing into the vices of the idolatrous heathen.* Ch. iv. 1—v. 21.

I.

THE APOSTLE exhorts to humility and concord, particularly with a view to the distribution of spiritual gifts, and the appointment of officers in the church. Ch. iv. 1—16.

1. He bespeaks their attention to his advice, from the consideration of his persecutions; and earnestly recommends mutual forbearance, and unity, ver. 1—3.

Ver. 1. *I, therefore, the prisoner¹ on account of the Lord², entreat you that ye walk worthily of the calling³ with which ye have been called.*

Having represented the exuberant display of divine power and mercy in the invitation of you, who were once idolatrous Gentiles, to the faith of the gospel; and in freely admitting you to the character and privileges of children of God, let me now remind you of the obligations under which you are laid by your holy profession. And remember, my brethren, that the man who inculcates these duties upon you is Paul the prisoner: the prisoner for his and your master Jesus Christ, and for the testimony which he has borne to his doctrine. He is Paul, the prisoner for you Gentiles, who lost his liberty for

¹ *The prisoner.*] The apostle recurs to the expression ch. iii. 1; and some suppose the parenthesis continued through the whole of the third chapter. The consideration of the exhortations being addressed to them by the apostle while suffering in their cause, would give them great weight with every ingenuous mind.

² *On account of the Lord.*] εν Κυρίῳ, in the Lord; “pro dia tou Κυρίου, ut c. iii. 1. Vel nomine Jesu Christi vos obtestor.” Rosenmuller.

³ *Worthily of the calling.*] “i. e. (says Dr. Chandler) in a manner agreeable to the nature and suitable to the design of it.” “of the honourable appellations, children of God, &c., by which you are called.” Macknight.

his zeal in your service, and for his known attachment to the rights and privileges of the Gentile church; who would not, therefore, impose upon you any unnecessary restraint, and whose sufferings for you entitle him to a peculiar share in your regard. And the sum and substance of my advice to you is this: That you would, upon all occasions, behave in such a manner as to reflect credit upon your Christian profession, and to exemplify the beneficial energy of your evangelical expectations and hopes.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 1.

With all humility of mind⁴ and gentleness⁵; with long-suffering⁶, bearing with each other⁷ in love; earnestly endeavouring to preserve the unity of the spirit⁸ in the bond of peace⁹.

2.

3.

And, in the first place, let me recommend humility and lowliness of spirit, recollecting that you owe all the privileges you possess to the free, unmerited, unsolicited goodness of God. And let this consideration suppress all disquietude and jealousy at the supposed superiority of others, either in offices or endowments.

Let your disposition be kind and gentle, not easily offended, not angry at trifles: and, though the provocation be great, let it not throw you off your guard, nor induce you to use intemperate language, much less to indulge a spirit of resentment and revenge. Bear with each others ignorance, infirmities, and prejudices; recollecting how much you need the forbearance of others. And, if you cultivate the kind affection which the gospel recommends, you will not find this a difficult task. Finally: be unwearied in your endeavours to promote mutual kindness among individuals, and the peace and unity of the church, by cultivating in yourselves and others that peaceful spirit which is the bond of society.

2. The apostle suggests various considerations to recommend harmony and peace, ver. 4—6.

There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called to one hope¹⁰.

4.

⁴ Humility.] “Modestia vel humilitas maxime decet homines, qui omnia vera bona Deo se debere sentiunt.” Rosenmuller.

⁵ Gentleness.] “Lenitatis est non moveri ob res leves.” Rosenmuller.

⁶ Long-suffering.] “Indulgentia, etiam in gravioribus cohibere iram.” Rosenmuller.

⁷ Bearing with each other.] “Ita ut toleretis vos invicem, amore compulsi.” Rosenmuller.

⁸ Unity of spirit.] “animorum studiorumque consensus, in primis in religione. Alii το πνευμα interpretantur corpus spirituale, ecclesiam: alii religionem ipsam.” Rosenmuller.

⁹ Bond of peace.] “vinculum tranquillitatis, i. e. tranquillitas, quæ est vinculum societatis: est tropus omnibus linguis communis.” Rosenmuller.

¹⁰ To one hope.] “to one common hope, i. e. to the hope of the same blessedness and salvation. Thus the preposition is rendered by our translators, Luke i. 17; and thus it is used by

Ch. IV.
Ver. 4.

Every thing concurs to induce you to live in peace and union. There is one body, of which you are all members, namely, the church; there is one spirit which animates this body, of whose various gifts you are respectively partakers. And there is one hope, the hope of a resurrection to everlasting life, which is the great object of Christian revelation, and in this most important blessing you all equally share.

5, 6. *One Lord*¹, *one faith*², *one baptism*³, *one God, even the Father of all*⁴, *who is above all*⁵, *and through all*⁶, *and in all*⁷.

Be it further remembered, as a powerful inducement to Christian unanimity, that there is one Master, even Christ, whose servants you are, whose laws you must obey, and whose benign example you are to follow. There is also one great article of faith, in which you all agree, namely, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead; and, agreeing in this essential principle, you may well bear with each others differences in things of less importance. There is one rite, that of baptism, by which you have all been initiated into the Christian communion; and, in consequence of which, without submitting to the burdensome ceremonies of the law, you become entitled to all the privileges of the sons of God. And, to sum up all, there is one God, the sole object of your faith and adoration; whose providence governs all, whose energy supports all things, whose spirit dwells in all believers, and who thus demonstrates himself to be the kind impartial Father of all. Let jealousy and discord be for ever banished from amongst those who are united together by so many strong and tender ties.

the best Greek authors." Chandler. Mr. Wakefield drops *της κλησεως υμων*, on the authority of the Æthiopic version, which however is not noticed by Griesbach.

¹ *Lord.*] "or Master; this is in a peculiar manner applied to our blessed Saviour, I Cor. viii. 6, and signifies his authority over the church." Chandler.

² *One faith.*] "One and the same gospel, containing one settled and fixed scheme of truth, that was preached by him and his apostles." Chandler.

³ *One baptism.*] Hence some infer that water baptism is not obligatory, understanding the apostle to refer here to the baptism of the spirit. But there can be little doubt that the apostle here means the baptism of water, which it is certain that he himself practised. See Doddridge. "All Christians were equally baptized by water." Chandler.

⁴ *Father of all.*] "the universal creator: Father in an especial manner of the rational creation, and particularly of every faithful Christian." Chandler.

⁵ *Above all.*] "superior in perfection, dignity, and authority: even above him who is the one Lord of all Christians, being his Father and his God." Chandler.

⁶ *Through all.*] "Universally present: upholding all things by his power, directing all things by his wisdom, overruling and disposing all events by his providence, managing the affairs of his church." Chandler.

⁷ *In all.*] The word *υμων* (*you*) is not found in the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, nor in the Æthiopic version; it is omitted by Mr. Wakefield, and marked as doubtful by Archbishop Newcome. "Amongst you all; manifesting his goodness by the privileges to which he has called you, and the extraordinary gifts of his spirit." Chandler.

3. As a further incentive to Christian unity, he reminds them that all their spiritual gifts were imparted by Christ in that measure and degree which he thought fit, ver. 7, 8. Ch. IV.

*Now unto every one of us has been granted in its measure the gracious gift of Christ*⁸. Ver. 7.

It is particularly unbecoming for the disciples of Christ to entertain jealousies and to foment controversies concerning the pre-eminence of spiritual gifts, because they possess none but what they received from the free unmerited kindness of Christ himself, and in that measure and degree which he has been pleased to communicate. No one, therefore, can have any right to be discontented on the one hand, or vainglorious on the other.

*Wherefore the scripture saith, He ascended on high, he led captivity captive, he gave gifts to men*⁹. 8.

What I have now observed concerning our entire dependence upon Christ for the gifts we possess, may be very well expressed in the words of David in Psalm lxxviii., which was written upon the occasion of the removal of the ark to Mount Sion, ver. 18. The Psalmist describes Jehovah as a glorious conqueror returning from the wars to take possession of his imperial throne, leading in triumph his captive enemies, the late oppressors of his loyal people, and distributing magnificent presents amongst his faithful followers. Thus it may be said of our glorious chief, that he has ascended to his heavenly throne, that he has subdued his enemies and ours, having, by his death, abolished all the ceremonial law, which was the great bar to our acceptance with God; and, like a triumphant conqueror, he has distributed to his faithful adherents those precious gifts of the holy spirit, which are the sure pledge of our admission into the family of God.

⁸ *In its measure, &c.*] This is Mr. Wakefield's translation. "In such measure and proportion as Christ thinks proper to distribute them." Chandler. It appears from this and other passages of scripture, that the distribution of spiritual gifts and powers, in the apostolic age, was under the direction of Christ himself; who during that period seems to have maintained a personal, and often a visible and sensible, intercourse with the church. See Matt. xxviii. 20.

⁹ *The scripture saith;*] i. e. David, Ps. lxxviii. 18; where he represents God returning as a conqueror from a complete victory over the enemies of his people, and bestowing rewards upon his faithful adherents. The expression in the psalm is, "thou hast received gifts;" but the Chaldee paraphrase and the Syriac and Arabic versions render it as the apostle cites it, "he gave gifts;" and this, as Dr. Chandler observes, "is the genuine sense of the place, for God could no otherwise receive gifts, than as he caused them to be given to his people. I suppose this whole passage alludes to the custom of victorious princes causing their captives to pass before them, and distributing largesses to their people. The passage is cited, not, as I apprehend, by way of strict proof, but by way of accommodation, and to illustrate the point by a like instance."

Ch. IV. 4. The apostle, in a parenthesis, argues the antecedent humiliation of Christ, from the prediction of his exaltation, ver. 9, 10.

Ver. 9. *Now this* expression, "*he ascended,*" *what does it mean*¹, *but that he [first] descended also into the lower parts of the earth*²?

The Psalmist saith that he ascended: now if we apply this language to Christ, to whom it may easily be accommodated, it may lead us to reflect upon a very important circumstance relating to Jesus, which, indeed, ought ever to be present to our minds; I mean his humiliation, his ignominious death, and descent into the grave; a fact which, however offensive to unbelievers, must be admitted and regarded by us as the great foundation of our faith and hope.

10. *He that descended*³, *is the same who also ascended above all heavens*⁴, *that he might complete all things*⁵.

Unbelievers may, if they please, revile us as the disciples of a crucified malefactor. We glory in the assurance, founded upon evidence the most satisfactory, that the same Jesus who was crucified and laid in the grave, was raised from the dead; and, though he is now removed from all visible intercourse with this world, he is exalted to higher dignity and authority than any of the other prophets and messengers of God; being constituted head of the church, and empowered to communicate those spiritual gifts which are

¹ *What does it mean?*] τὴ ἐξίτη, "How can it be, unless—" Wakefield. The apostle argues, that as Jesus ascended, he must first have descended: the inference, perhaps, is not perfectly logical; but this allusion to the death and burial of Christ is a plain proof that this fact lay uppermost in the apostle's mind, and was regarded by him as of great importance in the Christian system.

² *Lower parts of the earth.*] This expression signifies the *womb*, Ps. cxxxix. 15; and the *grave*, Ps. lxxiii. 9. In the latter sense it is unquestionably used by the apostle in this place, as Dr. Newcome rightly observes. The word *first* (πρῶτον) is wanting in the most authentic manuscripts, and is dropped by Griesbach. It is evident that the text affords no *argument* for the commonly received doctrine of the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

³ *He that descended.*] The apostle seems desirous of impressing the recollection of the death of Christ upon the minds of his readers, as an event which ought to be remembered in connexion with his exaltation, and of which they ought never to be ashamed.

⁴ *Above all heavens.*] An allusion, no doubt, to our Lord's ascension in the air; but as the fact cannot be true in a literal and local sense, there being no such concentric spheres as the Jewish philosophy supposed, the true meaning of the apostle probably is, to express the unrivalled superiority of Jesus over all former prophets and messengers of God, and his headship over the church. See Eph. i. 10, iii. 15.

⁵ *Complete all things.*] So Wakefield. things, *i. e.* persons. See Tyrwhit's *Dissertation on the Creation of all Things by Jesus Christ*, in the *Commentaries and Essays*. The church is the fulness or complement of Christ the head, ch. i. 23. He supplies or fills the various parts with vital influence; *i. e.* he communicates to the church what is necessary to its existence and well-being, viz. the gifts of the holy spirit, by which the apostles and teachers of Christianity were qualified for their mission, and by which the gospel was promulgated in the world. See Mac-knight and Chandler. "that he might bestow on all his disciples a fulness of gifts." Newcome.

necessary for the completion of this his mystical body, and for the growth Ch. IV.
and perfection of every part.

5. Resuming his discourse, he reminds his readers, that the gifts communicated by Christ were intended to qualify believers for the exercise of different offices for the edification of the church, ver. 11—13.

And he appointed⁶ some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting⁷ of the saints, for employment in the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ. Ver. 11.
12.

By the different gifts and powers which our exalted and triumphant chief has bestowed upon his disciples, he has qualified and appointed some to be apostles, the immediate witnesses of his resurrection from the dead, whom he furnished with a complete and comprehensive knowledge of the simplicity, liberality, and extent of the gospel dispensation. Others he qualified for the office of prophets, occasionally inspiring them with the foreknowledge of future events, and honouring them with extraordinary revelations for the instruction of others. And the main design of these chief and most useful offices in the church is to publish the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, and to unite believers of both descriptions in one firm, compact and harmonious body. Some were qualified for, and appointed to, the office of evangelists,

⁶ *He appointed:]* or, he gave. As a triumphant conqueror having taken possession of his kingdom, he dispenses honours and offices to his faithful adherents. This is an additional argument that Christ had a personal intercourse with the church during the apostolic age, of which there has been no proof or example since. See ver. 7. The gifts of the spirit seem to have been dispensed immediately by him, John xv. 26; and he repeatedly appeared to the apostle Paul, to direct and support him in his apostolic labours. There might therefore be a propriety in ascribing effects immediately to his interposition, and even in directing prayers to him in the apostolic age, which would be unwarrantable and highly improper now that we have no evidence of his personal presence and agency.

⁷ *Perfecting.]* Dr. Chandler observes, that “καταρτίζω signifies an exact composition of one thing out of many; and figuratively, to reconcile those who have been at variance. So that the ‘perfection of the saints’ seems to intend the full settlement of the church, by introducing Jews and Gentiles into it, and uniting them together in affection and love as members of the same body.”

Archbishop Newcome remarks, that perhaps the first clause of the 12th verse refers to apostles and prophets, the second to evangelists, and the third to pastors and teachers. This observation appears to me to be judicious, and I have adopted it in the exposition. Dr. Doddridge says, he “shall not take upon him to determine whether two different offices are intended by pastors and teachers; but that it has been justly observed, that if diocesan bishops were the very remedy by which the holy ghost designed to prevent or heal those schisms of which the Ephesian church was in such apparent danger (Acts xx. 29, 30), it is very strange there should be no mention of them amidst all these ecclesiastics which are here enumerated.” Dr. Doddridge and others connect the two first clauses of the 12th verse, and render them thus: “for the perfecting of saints to the work of the ministry,” &c. The words will very well bear this sense, though the other appears to me preferable.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 12.

companions of the apostles, who by the gift of tongues, and the instructions which they received from the apostles, became qualified and authorized to teach the gospel in those places which the apostles could not themselves visit; and lastly, some were appointed by Christ to reside in the churches which were formed in different places for the purpose of superintending discipline and communicating further instruction where it was necessary, so that the magnificent edifice of the church might continually increase, and the body of Christ might grow in all its parts.

13. *Till we all¹ arrive at the unity of the faith and knowledge of the son of God, at perfect maturity², at the full proportion of the stature of Christ³.*

These various offices appointed by the great head of the church, and occupied by persons qualified by spiritual gifts for their respective situations, ought not to be the object of low ambition and malignant jealousy. They are calculated to unite Christians of all classes and nations in the harmonious belief and courageous profession of the fundamental truth, that Jesus Christ is the son of God, the first-begotten from the dead, the promised deliverer of the world, and in a conduct correspondent to this holy profession. When this is accomplished, we may indeed be said to have attained the manhood of Christianity; and then in our respective stations we shall appear as full-grown limbs of that mystical body, which, united to Christ the head, forms the complete figure of the universal church.

¹ *Till we all, &c.]* The apostle keeps in view a favourite idea which he had advanced ch. i. 23. The church is a mystical body, of which Christ is the head, and individual Christians are parts of that body. While they think the observance of Jewish rites, or any other condition besides faith in the mission of Christ and a practical profession of it, necessary to communion with him, they are imperfect, ungrown parts of the body; but when they fully adopt the Christian faith in its pure and uncorrupted state, they are grown to a manly proportion, and are of a proper size to be joined to that mystical body of which Christ is the head. If we carry in mind this analogy, to which the apostle is so very partial, we shall easily enter into his meaning in this and the following verses, though he occasionally breaks and mixes his metaphors.

² *At perfect maturity.]* So Worsley. Gr. "manhood." Dr. Macknight ingeniously observes, that "the apostle having represented the Christian church under the idea of Christ's body, ver. 4, he here speaks of it as in a state of childhood, whilst its members were few in number and imperfect in knowledge; and told the Ephesians, that the supernaturally endowed teachers were to continue in the church till it was so enlarged, and so well instructed in the doctrine of the gospel, as to be able to direct and defend itself without any supernatural aid. This advanced state of the church the apostle termed perfect manhood: at which when the church arrived, the supernatural gifts of the Spirit were to be removed as no longer necessary."

Perhaps the apostle's meaning rather is, that these supernatural communications were made for the purpose of promoting the growth of every individual; not that they would continue till all were come to maturity.

³ *The full proportion of the stature of Christ.]* εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τῆς πληρωματος, *to the measure of the stature of the complement of Christ.* See ch. i. 23. *i. e.* till they have attained their full growth as portions of the mystical body of Christ, till they are become mature and perfect Christians, well instructed and well disciplined in the practice of the Christian religion. "to the full size of the stature of Christ." Wakefield.

6. The great design of all the gifts dispensed by Christ, is to promote stability of principle and mutual affection in the several members of the great body of professing Christians, ver. 14—16. Ch. IV.

That we may be no longer children⁴, fluctuating, and whirled about by every wind of doctrine, through the sleight of men⁵, and through their crafty method of deceit⁶. Ver. 14.

The intention of this wise provision which Christ has made for the instruction of the church is, that we may have a clear and distinct knowledge of the leading principles of the Christian doctrine; deriving them from those teachers only who prove their commission from him. Being thus well-grounded in the faith, we shall not become the dupes of false and artful teachers, who, to answer their own secular views, would impose upon us their own mischievous errors as Christian truths. Nor shall we, like children, waver in uncertainty, without any fixed principles; at one time professing one opinion, at another time another, being destitute of all consistency of judgement and dignity of character.

But maintaining the truth⁷ in love, we may grow up in all things to him who is the head, even Christ. 15.

⁴ *That we may be no longer children.*] The apostle here plainly declares that just principles of the Christian doctrine, derived from the instructions of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and other inspired and authorized teachers, are the only proper security against false and pernicious doctrines propagated by artful and bad men, for their own personal advantage: he particularly alludes to judaizing teachers. Dr. Chandler observes, that "the apostle heaps together a crowd of strong and lively figures. He represents such of the Christian church as were wavering and unsettled in their principles, as children who are continually changing their mind." He describes the conduct of false teachers by a word (*κυβερνεια*) which signifies that "they had no more honour than gamesters at dice;" and whose opinions have "no more certainty or constancy than the dice, which vary at every throw." *Πανεργια* signifies *sleight of hand*, and denotes the subtlety and false arts of those who endeavoured to corrupt them.

⁵ *The sleight of men.*] *κυβερνεια*, "1. *alea, lusus aleæ*; 2. *fallacia et astutia in ludo tesserarum*, et per synecdochen significat, *omnem fraudulentiam et versutiam*, qua utuntur homines alios decepturi." Schleusner.

"The deceitful arts of false teachers are here compared to those of gamesters, who, by using false dice, cheat those with whom they play. The men whose base arts the apostle describes were the unbelieving Jews and heathen philosophers, who opposed the gospel by sophistry and calumny." Macknight.

⁶ *Their crafty method of deceit.*] *εν πανεργια προς την μεθοδειαν*, "craft to invent methods." Worsley. "*Solertia ad male agendum, multo usu comparata.*" Schleusner; who observes that the word is always taken in a bad sense in the New Testament, though it admits a good one. *Μεθοδεια της πλανεως, excogitata ratio alios decipiendi, et in errores inducendi.*" Schleusner.—"through their craftiness for the purpose of artful deceit." Newcome.—"for the more subtle disposition and orderance of error." Chandler.—"by their malicious cunning, by the contrivances of error." Wakefield.

⁷ *But maintaining the truth.*] *Αληθευοντες* denotes "not so much speaking truth as embracing and adhering to it; and to render the Christian perfect, he must add to this regard to truth, love, or universal benevolence." Chandler.—"speaking the truth in love." Newcome.—"dealing truly, may grow up in love." Wakefield.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 15.

Being thus instructed in the genuine doctrine of Christ by apostles, prophets, and evangelists, it is our duty stedfastly to adhere to the truth, to defend it against all opposers, and upon no consideration whatever to suffer it to be corrupted by human inventions. And this may and ought to be done in perfect consistency with genuine benevolence; for, indeed, the more we know and study the doctrine of Christ, the more earnest, diligent, and persevering shall we be in our endeavours to do good to others. Thus shall we in our respective situations, as parts of the mystical body of Christ, be daily growing up in due proportion, to him who is our perfect and glorious head.

16. *From whom the whole body¹ fitly compacted and connected together by the aid of every joint, and according to the proportionate operation of every single limb², thriveth³ to the improvement⁴ of itself in love.*

It is from Christ, the head, that the whole church, which, like the natural body, consists of various parts and limbs, every one in its proper place, ornamental, useful, and necessary to the compactness, beauty, and perfection of the whole, derives its nourishment and vigour. It is from him that those supplies of the holy spirit are communicated, by which every believer in his proper station is qualified to occupy the post assigned him, and contri-

¹ *From whom the whole body.*] “The whole body that consists of divers parts: συναρμολογημενον is in all these parts proportioned and fitted for the nearest conjunction, και συμειξαζομενον, and to connect and fasten with each other by every joint contributing to this purpose; so that the body receives its increase by the operation, i. e. the growth of every single member, till by that sympathy or kind of affection which there is between them, it grows up to its full strength and perfection. And thus the various offices and gifts of the Christian church do unite, as the joints of the body do the several parts of it, the several members of the church, and will all conspire to promote its welfare, honour, and prosperity, if those members are united to one another in love.” Chandler.

² *Every limb.*] This is the reading of the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, the Syriac, Coptic, and other versions: it is marked as not improbable by Griesbach, and is adopted by Newcome and Wakefield.

³ *Thriveth.*] την αυξησιν τς σωματος ποιειται. Wakefield. Literally, *maketh increase of the body*. “maketh its increase.” Newcome; who remarks, that “in the Greek the antecedent is used instead of the pronoun.”

⁴ *Improvement.*] So Wakefield. οικοδομην, *edification*: Newcome, and others; but *improvement* better corresponds with the apostle's allegory.

“By the stress,” says Dr. Priestley, “which the apostle here and elsewhere lays upon good morals, we see that this was the great object of the gospel; and in this respect it was essentially different from the religion of the Gentile world, which in reality had no connexion with morals, as it consisted of nothing but superstitious observances, with which they thought the favour of their gods to be arbitrarily connected. So far was religion, properly so called, from teaching good morals to the Gentile world, that their temples, and the precincts of them, were often used for the vilest purposes: accordingly, Christians were soon distinguished from heathens for their better morals. But this was not effected immediately, because it requires time for good principles to operate, and to produce their genuine fruits. On this account, the apostles are so frequent and earnest in their expostulations with their new converts on this most important subject.”

butes to the increase and prosperity of the general body of Christians. Ch. IV.
Though, therefore, all cannot occupy the highest posts, nor all possess the Ver. 16.
most splendid gifts, yet all may be virtuous, useful, and approved. Let, then,
all jealousy and contention be entirely laid aside, and all exert their earnest
and harmonious efforts in supporting the truth, and in diffusing the know-
ledge and the spirit of pure and practical Christianity.

II.

The apostle earnestly exhorts the Christian converts to shun the impuri-
ties of heathenism, and to maintain a dignity of character becoming their
superior knowledge and advantages, ch. iv. 17—24.

1. He solemnly cautions them against the evil examples of their heathen
neighbours, ver. 17—19.

*This therefore I declare, and earnestly charge⁵ you in the name of the 17.
Lord⁶, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles⁷ walk, in the vanity of their
minds⁸, darkened in their understanding⁹, alienated from the life of God¹⁰ 18.
because of their ignorance, because of the hardness¹¹ of their heart: who 19.
have abandoned themselves without remorse¹² to lasciviousness, and to all
exorbitant impurity¹³.*

⁵ Charge.] Dr. Chandler observes, that “the word μαρτυρομαι in the best Greek writers often signifies to beseech, and earnestly entreat; and that this is unquestionably the meaning of it in this place.” Archbishop Newcome renders it “to charge,” and refers to 1 Thess. ii. 12.

⁶ In the name of the Lord.] εν Κυριω, in, or by, the Lord: i. e. “by his authority, or by the greatness of his love, or by the sincerity of your love and regard to him.” Chandler.—“as a disciple and apostle of Christ.” Newcome.

⁷ Walk as the Gentiles.] λοιπα, the other Gentiles, which is in the received text, is wanting in many manuscripts and versions; it is omitted by Mr. Wakefield, and marked as doubtful by Archbishop Newcome. ‘Walking’ is a common expression in Paul’s writings, to denote a manner or course of life.

⁸ Vanity of their minds:] i. e. “their false and inconclusive reasonings, which led them into the most absurd and dangerous errors in judgement and practice.” Rom. i. 21; 1 Pet. i. 18. Chandler. See Macknight.

⁹ Darkened in their understanding:] viz. “through contracted habits of vice, and those strong prejudices and corrupt principles in which they had been brought up; which prevent the access of light and knowledge, and pervert the judgement.” Dr. Chandler.

¹⁰ Life of God.] “from that course of life which God requires: from living to God.” Gal. ii. 19. Grotius, Newcome. “from that life which God prescribes and approves.” Chandler.

¹¹ Hardness.] πωρωσις, blindness, according to the common translation, and so Wakefield and Newcome. Dr. Chandler says, “It properly signifies the hardness and callousness of a man’s skin, contracted by frequent exercise and labour; and this seems to be the true rendering, because the apostle had spoken of the darkness of their understanding just before.”

¹² Without remorse.] απηλπιχοτες. Some copies read απηλπικότες, without hope, desperate, and therefore wicked. The common reading is supported by the best authorities. “The word primarily means, to be void of sorrow; hence it signifies persons who through despair have thrown off all sense of grief and misery, and cease all care to free themselves from it. Hence it

Ch. IV.
Ver. 19.

Being therefore earnestly desirous that you may attain to Christian perfection, it is my solemn declaration in his name, and my explicit testimony under his authority, that the practice of vice is utterly inconsistent with a vital union to him, and with the participation of blessings from him: I warn and charge you, therefore, as you value your relation to him and your expectations from him, that you cautiously abstain from all those criminal excesses which in your unconverted state you practised without hesitation, and to which your heathen neighbours now abandon themselves without consideration or remorse. Their miserable reasonings, unassisted by the clear light of divine revelation, have indeed led them into the most pernicious errors both in doctrine and practice. Their understandings being obscured by the most inveterate prejudices, their affections being alienated from the practice of virtue, and from obedience to the will of God, being ignorant that his favour alone is the true source of life and happiness, and their hearts having become callous to every refined feeling, and even to the sense of shame, they abandon themselves without compunction to vices which are the disgrace of human nature, and utterly inconsistent with every sentiment of purity, dignity, and virtue.

2. The apostle further alleges, that believers in Christ have been instructed to aspire after the strictest purity of morals, ver. 20—24.

20, 21. *But it is not so with you. Ye have learned Christ¹: inasmuch² as ye have heard him, and been instructed in him, even as the truth is in Jesus³;*

Far different, my Christian friends, I trust, is your present character from that prejudice, ignorance, pollution, and callousness of mind which I have just described, by which you yourselves were formerly entangled, and in which, as you well know, the heathen world is now immersed. It is your privilege that

implies the last and worst state of wickedness and vice, in which men have no remorse of conscience, but are desperately wicked, hardened, and insensible in vice." Chandler.

¹ *Exorbitant impurity.*] In the public version, "to work uncleanness with greediness." Πλεονεξία, Dr. Chandler says, properly signifies *covetousness*; and he understands it of those who committed these crimes for gain. Some of the best manuscripts read και πλεονεξιας, which Mr. Wakefield follows. Mr. Locke in a valuable note shows that the word πλεονεξια is not uncommonly used by the apostle as a decent expression for lewdness of the grossest and most abominable kind, and understands it in the same sense here: so likewise Wakefield. See Eph. v. 3; 1 Thess. iv. 5; 1 Cor. v. 10, 11; Rom. i. 29.

² *It is not so with you.*] Such is the spirited translation of Chandler. *q. d.* "This is not your practice: ye have learned Christ: Christianity, in which you have been instructed, hath reformed you." See Luke xxii. 26.—"You have been scholars at his school." Locke.

³ *Inasmuch.*] Εγχε. See Chandler, Wakefield.—"since ye have heard concerning him." Newcome.

³ *In Jesus:*] "the antecedent for the pronoun, as in ver. 16." Newcome.

you have been introduced into the school of Christ. You have heard him addressing you in the person of his ambassadors; you have been taught by him who sent his apostles and prophets to preach the gospel to you, and who instructed them in what they were to deliver in his name; and be assured, whatever insinuations some may throw out to the contrary, that the pure uncorrupted gospel has been preached to you, and that your teachers have faithfully accomplished the object of their mission. And this was the tenor of the message which they had in charge to exhort you.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 21.

To put off the old man of your former course of life⁴, which was going to destruction with deceitful desires⁵, and to renew yourselves in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man, the man according to God⁶, created to righteousness, and holiness, and truth⁷.

22.

23.

24.

On this great theatre of human life you have formerly acted a most immoral and a dangerous part. You sustained the character which your heathen neighbours now do. You lived in the practice of vices, which, whatever flattering appearances they might assume, afforded no real satisfaction, and which tended to your destruction both in body and soul. The Christian doctrine warned you to renounce the character and to escape the danger. Christ by his faithful messengers required you to prepare your mind for a very different course of life. He taught you another and a far more honourable and useful lesson. You are now to assume a new character; a character such as God will approve, and which is formed after his own model; a cha-

⁴ *To put off the old man, &c.]* This is Mr. Wakefield's translation, and seems to convey the true meaning of the passage. Some think there is an allusion here to the custom of baptism; in which the baptized persons laid aside their old garments when they went into the water, in token of laying aside their former sins, and put on white garments after baptism, to denote the purity of their Christian conversation. Dr. Chandler thinks that this custom of exchanging garments was not so ancient as the times of the apostle: yet it might have been the custom of the Jews, from whom the mode of baptism was probably borrowed. Chandler, however, supposes that the apostle "particularly alludes to theatrical representations, in which the actors put on different characters and took on themselves the persons of other men." The apostle's idea therefore seems to be, that in the school of Christ they have been taught by him to act a very different part from what they had before practised.

⁵ *Going to destruction, &c.]* The unbridled licentiousness of their heathen state naturally tends to destruction here and hereafter. See Wakefield.

⁶ *The man according to God.]* So Mr. Wakefield, see ver. 18, the man formed after the image of God, and living the life of God. They are to put off their former ancient selves, their heathen character and vices, and to assume a new self, a holy character, a person resembling God, approved by him, and devoted to him.

⁷ *And truth.]* The Clermont and some other ancient manuscripts, and the Italic version, read *καὶ ἀληθεία*. The common reading is *holiness of truth*; or, true holiness, not external, but that of the mind. See Newcome. Mr. Wakefield's version is, "fashioned in righteousness and holiness, the true man."

Ch. IV.
Ver. 24.

racter by which you may be distinguished as belonging to him, as dedicated to his service, as the firm and faithful adherents to truth and virtue.

III.

The apostle cautions his readers against the vices of heathenism, and urges them to the practice of the contrary virtues upon principles peculiar to the Christian religion, ch. iv. 25—v. 2.

1. He recommends a strict regard to truth, ver. 25.

25. *Therefore, laying aside falsehood¹, speak truth every one to his neighbour, for we are members one of another.*

Having thus, by your profession of the Christian religion, assumed a new character, let your conduct ever be consistent with it. And though in your former heathen state the violation of truth was regarded by you as a matter of little moment, if any advantage could be gained by it, you must now, under your present character, utterly renounce every species and degree of falsehood and deceit; and in all your conversation and intercourse with each other, your language must always be the representative of your real sentiments; you must be sincere in your declarations, and inviolably faithful to your engagements. You are all parts of the body of Christ, and therefore are all members one of another; your true interest is one and the same; you must therefore feel for others, and act by them as you would feel for and act by your own selves, as though they were vital parts of your own bodies.

2. He further cautions against exorbitant anger, ver. 26, 27.

26. *If ye be angry², yet sin not; let not the sun go down upon your resentment³, and give no advantage⁴ to the accuser⁵.*

¹ *Therefore, &c.*] The apostle now proceeds to state the qualities of that old man which they were to put off, viz: the vices of their heathen state; and to contrast them with those of the new man which they were to put on, viz: the virtues of the Christian religion. And first of all they must lay aside the practice of lying, which the heathen philosophy approves and recommends. *He may lie who knows how to do it*, says Plato, *εν δεοντι καιρω*, in a fit season. See this and many other passages from the writings of the philosophers, to the same purpose, in Whitby on the text. In opposition to which, the apostle recommends a stedfast adherence to truth upon all occasions, and enforces his exhortation by his favourite analogy, that being all members of the mystical body of Christ, they are all members of each other, and they cannot injure others without in some degree hurting themselves.

² *If ye be angry.*] See Wakefield, Newcome, Bowyer, Beza, and Grotius. "The words," says Dr. Whitby, "are not a command to be angry, but a caution to avoid sinful anger." Comp. John ii. 19. See also Matt. vii. 1, 7; Prov. xix. 25; Isa. viii. 9, 10; Nah. iii. 14, 15; Eccclus. xxx. 9. Dr. Chandler says, that "the expression may be rendered 'Are ye angry? see

In your former heathen state you were accustomed to regard anger and revenge as the qualities of a noble and generous mind, and regarded it as meanness of spirit to forgive an injury. But you are now entered under the discipline of Christ, and have assumed the profession of Christians. Anger is a passion which, in the present state of imperfection, will occasionally rise in the breast. But, whatever be the provocation, guard to the utmost of your power against excess in your resentment. Let not anger rise upon trivial occasions, nor to an exorbitant degree, and suffer it not to dwell in your heart. Where offence has been given, be easily pacified; where it is acknowledged, be ready to forgive; and where correction is necessary, let it be administered with moderation. And give no occasion to the enemies of your faith to calumniate your character, and to say that Christians, whatever they may pretend to, are neither more forbearing nor more placable than other men.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 27.

3. The apostle recommends honesty and industry, ver. 28.

Let him that hath stolen⁶, steal no more; but rather let him labour, providing with his hands what is good⁷, that he may have something to impart to him that is necessitous.

28.

that ye do not sin; viz. by indulging it too far, and harbouring your resentment too long; και, tamen, John i. 10; 1 Cor. v. 10; Phil. i. 18."

⁵ *Let not the sun, &c.*] Plutarch says that the scholars of Pythagoras, when they had been angry with each other, shook hands and embraced before the sun went down. See Whitby. To this the apostle may perhaps allude. Though, as Dr. Chandler observes, "the advice is not to be understood literally, as though it were always sinful to keep anger after sunset." "The plain meaning (continues he) of the whole advice is, 'be not angry without just occasion; and, whenever you are, be of a reconcilable spirit, and carry not your displeasure against the offender too far, either in measure or duration.'"

⁶ *Give no advantage, &c.*] Dr. Chandler observes, that "the phrase διδοναι τοπον, to give place, is used by the best Greek writers to signify the giving a handle, occasion, or opportunity, to any thing." Dr. Newcome's version is, "give not advantage," &c.

⁷ *The accuser.*] So Erasmus and Wakefield, and unquestionably right. In the common and most other versions it is "the devil." But in what sense it is not easy to explain. Dr. Chandler adopts both interpretations: "do not give occasion to the devil to lead you to commit the most heinous crimes, nor to the enemies of Christianity to reproach and slander you." There is no reason to believe that the apostle intended to express two meanings so very different. The latter, therefore, as being natural, intelligible, and pertinent, is by far the most probable. See Macknight; who, though he translates "devil," yet in his note remarks, that "Erasmus, with the Syriac version, gives the sense, *ut ne detis locum calumniatori*. According to their translation the apostle's meaning is, 'give no occasion to infidels to speak evil of the holy religion which ye profess.'" Possibly the apostle may mean nothing more than to guard them against giving way to a bad temper, an angry unforgiving spirit. John xiii. 2, διαβολος is used to express the wickedness of the heart of Judas. "do not yield to any temptation to sin, from whatever source it may arise." Priestley.

⁶ *Hath stolen, &c.*] Stealing was a common vice among the barbarous nations, nor was it regarded by them as deserving of reproach. See Whitby.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 28.

In your former heathen state, violations of honesty, where they could be committed with impunity, were as little regarded as violations of chastity, truth, and meekness, and were hardly thought worthy of blame: these, therefore, are some of the deeds of the old man, which you are to renounce altogether, now that you have assumed the profession of Christianity, and have entered upon a new and a holy life. Have any of you, then, unjustly deprived another of his property; let him immediately restore what he has unlawfully acquired, for there can be no repentance without restitution; and, for the future, let him resolutely abstain from every dishonest action, whatever temptation or opportunity may offer itself, and how secure soever he may be from detection and punishment. And let every one by honourable industry endeavour to acquire such a plentiful supply of the good things of this life, that he may not only be under no temptation to take unjustly what belongs to his neighbour, but may be both able and willing, from his own abundant stores, to relieve those who are in want.

4. That conversation be inoffensive and instructive, ver. 29, 30.

29. *Let no corrupt discourse¹ proceed out of your mouth, but whatever may be useful for edification in faith², that it may contribute to the benefit³ of*
30. *the hearers. And offend not⁴ the holy spirit of God⁵, by which ye have been sealed to the day of redemption⁶.*

¹ *What is good.*] “the good things of life.” Wakefield. “a livelihood.” Dr. Chandler; “or such a support as may not only be barely sufficient for himself, but may enable him to give somewhat to other persons who are in distress.”

¹ *Corrupt discourse.*] “By corrupt or rotten discourse,” says Archbishop Newcome, “obscene talk is principally meant. Hesychius explains σαπρον by αισχρον, ακαθαarton. The word properly means what is rancid, or putrid by age. Alberti.” Dr. Chandler observes, “that it is used by the best writers to signify idle, insignificant, useless, and unprofitable discourse; and in this large sense it appears to be used in this place, as seems plain not only from the original notion of the word, but from what the apostle expressly opposes to it.” Wakefield renders it *unmeaning*.

² *Edification in faith.*] “The reading of πισews, *faith*, is,” as Archbishop Newcome remarks, “well established by manuscripts: it is preferred by Bengelius;” and marked with approbation by Griesbach. The common reading, χρειας, is tautological. Mr. Wakefield renders the clause, “what is good to the furtherance of the business.” Dr. Chandler renders χρειας ‘occasion or use,’ and explains it of such kind of discourse as is suitable to the present occasion.

³ *Benefit.*] χαρι. Dr. Chandler explains “that it may be grateful and acceptable to such as hear it.” “*Ut gratus acceptusque sit.*” Raphelius. So Wakefield. χαρις being often used for the ‘gospel,’ or for the ‘temper and spirit of Christianity,’ the apostle may perhaps principally refer to their improvement in the knowledge and spirit of the gospel; especially if πισews be the true reading.

⁴ *Offend not.*] “Though the primary sense of λυπεω is to *grieve*, it is often used in the best writers for ‘offending’ and ‘displeasing.’ ‘Grieving the holy spirit of God’ signifies ‘offending God himself,’ who conferred those extraordinary gifts.” Chandler. “*Delicata res est spiritus Dei*, was a maxim of one of the ancients.” See Doddridge.

Another practice of your heathen state, which you must now entirely lay aside, is all trifling, foolish, and obscene conversation, all kind of language which has a tendency to corrupt the heart and to debase the character. Let not such discourse ever be heard among professing Christians. But let conversation in your social intercourse be always innocent, and often edifying. Endeavour to confirm each others faith in the gospel, and thus to improve each other in Christian knowledge, and in virtuous resolution. And do not, upon any consideration, by grossness of language, or indecency of behaviour, offend the delicacy or provoke the resentment of that holy spirit of God which dwells in the temple of your hearts, and whose residence there is a standing proof that you are his chosen people, and heirs of the promised inheritance. In other words, do not by any misdemeanour, either in conversation or conduct, offend God, and provoke him to withdraw from you those manifestations of his spirit which are the tokens of his favour, and the earnest of your deliverance from the power of sin and death.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 30.

5. The apostle urges them to abstain from all malignity and clamorous contention, and to cultivate kindness, forgiveness, and disinterested goodwill, after the example of God and Christ, ver. 31—v. 2.

Let all bitterness⁷, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be removed from you, with all malice.

31.

⁵ *Holy spirit of God.*] The gifts of the holy spirit, by which converted Gentiles were proved to be in covenant with God, are here personified, and said to be grieved or offended: i. e. corrupt discourse, as it tends to defeat the design of Christianity, would provoke God to withdraw from them the gifts of the spirit with which they are favoured.

⁶ *Sealed to the day of redemption:*] i. e. by which that covenant is sealed and ratified, the promises of which have a respect to blessings which will be hereafter conferred upon you at the day of redemption, i. e. at the resurrection, when you shall be put in the actual possession of a place in his kingdom, whereof the spirit is now an earnest. See Locke. See Rom. viii. 23. "As these gifts were vouchsafed in token of God's acceptance of the persons on whom they were conferred, and were thereby a kind of impression or seal that God put on them, to assure them of the future inheritance of his children, so if persons offended God by their vices, in such a manner as to provoke him to withdraw these gifts from them, they forfeited this seal of their right to the heavenly inheritance, and were left in a state of condemnation. And as these gifts were granted in confirmation of a religion which enjoined the greatest purity of heart and conversation, and the perpetual study of love and peace, the apostle, by placing this exhortation between the commands to abstain from corrupt conversation, and a bitter, wrathful, revengeful spirit and behaviour, seems plainly to intimate that by those sins God was in a peculiar manner offended." Chandler.

⁷ *Bitterness, &c.*] It is not easy to distinguish the different signification of each different word which is here used. Dr. Doddridge observes, "that perhaps it might only be the apostle's design, in amassing so many almost synonymous expressions together, to show that he would have them be upon their guard against all the malevolent passions, and those outrages of speech and expression which they tend to produce."

Ch. IV.
Ver. 31.

Among your unconverted and ungodly neighbours, who are under no restraint from moral and religious considerations, nothing is more common than malignant quarrels, fierce contentions and brawlings, abusive language, malice, and mischief. Be assured, my brethren, that nothing can be more contrary to the spirit of the gospel than such a temper and behaviour as this; and, if it is your desire to approve yourselves the genuine disciples of Jesus, you must utterly renounce these malignant passions, and live under the influence of a very different spirit.

32.
Ch. V.
Ver. 1.

And be ye kind one to another, tenderly affectioned¹, freely forgiving one another, even as God by Christ² hath freely forgiven you. Be ye, therefore³, the imitators of God, as beloved children.

Instead of hating, and wishing ill, and doing mischief to one another, the law to which you are now subject requires that you should be always ready to perform kind offices for each other; that, instead of contriving and rejoicing in each others calamities, you should sympathize in the tenderest manner with those who are in distress, and contribute to the utmost of your ability to their relief; instead of making a boast of taking ample revenge for a supposed injury or insult, you should be ready to forgive upon the first symptoms of repentance, and that without insisting always upon the satisfaction to which you are justly entitled. For, consider how often and how grievously you have offended God, and yet how kind he has been to you in sending Jesus Christ to offer you that forgiveness which you never sought for, and, had you been left to yourselves, would never have obtained. Imitate

¹ *Tenderly affectioned.*] This precept is very different from that of Epictetus, who says, "If one is in affliction, thou mayest say thou hast pity on him, but take care not to feel any pity." Macknight.

² *By Christ, &c.*] that is, 'God in the gospel has declared free pardon to all who repent and believe.' The expression *εἰς Χριστὸν* is very improperly rendered in the public version, "for Christ's sake," a phrase which greatly diminishes the force of the apostle's argument, which is to urge Christians to the exercise of a forgiving spirit, from the consideration of the great mercy of God exercised in the forgiveness of their offences without any foreign consideration whatever. He certainly did not mean to recommend to those who had been offended to withhold forgiveness till satisfaction had been made by a third party.

"God is no where said to forgive sin for the sake of Christ. It is a great injury to the character of the Divine Being to suppose that he does not forgive repenting sinners freely, without any satisfaction to his justice, or the intercession of others. All that is necessary is men's becoming proper objects of his mercy, which true repentance and leading a new life will always make them. If this had not been the case, the divine conduct could never have been proposed to our imitation in this respect. Now, we are taught to pray that God would forgive us, as we forgive others, and we are told that if our offending brother only repent, we must forgive him. The Divine Being, therefore, no doubt acts upon the same generous maxim." Dr. Priestley.

³ *Be ye, therefore.*] Griesbach joins the two first verses of the sixth chapter to the end of the fifth, "from which," as Chandler remarks, "they ought never to have been separated."

tate, then, the merciful spirit of your merciful God; and, instead of indulging a revengeful temper, rather be the first to invite to reconciliation those with whom you have the greatest reason to be offended. Thus, by your resemblance to your heavenly Father, approve yourselves his beloved children.

Ch. V.
Ver. 1.

And walk in love, even as Christ loved us, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice⁴ to God of fragrant odour.

2.

Let your whole life be a continued scene of benevolent exertions; and be ever ready to make the most generous sacrifices of ease and interest, of health and safety, for the benefit of your fellow-creatures. Such is the glorious example which our honoured Master hath set before us. Such was his love to mankind and his generous pity for lost sinners, that, after having laboured with indefatigable zeal for their instruction, he closed his ministry by sacrificing his life upon the cross for their benefit. And so acceptable was this illustrious instance of magnanimous self-denial to his heavenly Father, that he has crowned his virtue with a proportionate reward, and given him a name above every name. And be assured, my brethren, that all who follow his example shall participate in his triumph.

IV.

The apostle earnestly warns them against the vices of heathenism, and enjoins the Christian virtues of purity, prudence, temperance, and thankfulness, ch. v. 3—21.

1. He strictly prohibits, in every shape and in every degree, those gross impurities which were allowed amongst the heathen, ver. 3, 4.

Now let not fornication, nor any kind of impurity, nor licentious desire⁵,

3.

⁴ *Offering and sacrifice.*] Some distinguish προσφορά as 'a peace offering,' and θυσία as 'a sin offering.' See Macknight, and Dr. Bates's *Harmony of Divine Attributes*, p. 254. But Dr. Doddridge justly observes, "I cannot lay much stress upon this distinction." Neither, indeed, ought any stress to be laid upon the figurative representation of the death of Christ as a sacrifice, as though it necessarily implied atonement, propitiation, or satisfaction to God for the sins of men; a notion utterly unfounded in the scriptures. Christ, from good will to men, made a sacrifice of his life upon the cross; and his benevolent and disinterested conduct in this instance was highly acceptable to God, which is here expressed by the sacrificial term, 'an offering of fragrant odour.' See Lev. ii. 1—9; Numb. xv. 3—14. And it is the duty of the disciples of Christ to cherish and to exercise the same kind and generous spirit, and, where occasion may require, to submit to the greatest sacrifices for the good of others, 1 John iii. 16.

⁵ *Licentious desire.*] πλεονεξία: "excessive appetite." Wakefield. See Eph. iv. 19. The usual sense of πλεονεξία is 'covetousness;' but Locke, after Hammond, observes, "that if it is considered how often it stands connected with various species of impurity, it can hardly be doubted that in this connexion it is used as a decent expression for very gross crimes, such as were not even to be named amongst Christians." See Rom. i. 29.

Ch. V. *be even named amongst you, as becometh saints, nor ribaldry*¹, *nor buff-*
Ver. 4. *foonery*², *nor scurrilous jesting*³, *which are wholly improper*⁴; *but rather*
*graceful conversation*⁵.

You well know in what low estimation the virtues of purity and chastity are held by your heathen neighbours, how deeply their conversation is tinged with indecent and obscene language, and with how little shame or sense of guilt they indulge themselves in the most abominable practices. I now solemnly warn you, my brethren, that these habits of your former heathen and idolatrous state must be entirely relinquished, and for ever renounced. You must not only, as believers in Christ, consecrated and set apart from the rest of mankind, abstain from the practice, but even from the familiar mention of these odious vices. Your conversation, also, must be purified from all those lewd expressions and indecent speeches which afford so much mirth to men of gross and sensual minds, but which are wholly unsuitable to the dignity of the Christian character. I do not, however, mean to proscribe innocent mirth. God is not honoured by sadness of spirit. Let your conversation, then, be cheerful and easy; the natural effusion of a grateful heart, acceptable alike to God and man.

¹ *Ribaldry.*] See Worsley's translation. *αισχροτης* "indecent speeches." Wakefield. "The former advice," says Dr. Chandler, "related to impurity of action, this to obscenity of conversation and speech, which is here condemned by the apostle, as inconsistent with the obligation of our Christian profession; in which many who call themselves Christians give themselves very scandalous liberties, to the shocking of chaste ears, and to the breach of decency and all good manners."

² *Buffoonery.*] *μωρολογία.* Worsley. "unchaste speeches." Wakefield. "*Stodium ineptorum et impudicorum sermonum.*" Schleusner. Archbishop Newcome renders the word, *foolish talking*; q. d. "nor impure talk, Col. iii. 8; nor light and idle talk, unworthy of the character or of the subject; nor scurrilous jesting, injurious to peace and reputation." He adds, from Erasmus, "*Non fero quosdam qui quoties urbani videri volunt e divinis literis ad suas ineptias detorquent aliquid.*"

³ *Scurrilous jesting.*] *ευτραπεία.* So Newcome. "double meanings." Macknight. "*scurrilitas, dicacitas.*" Schleusner. "The original sense," says Dr. Chandler, "is an artfully turned discourse; it is used both in a good and bad sense. The apostle here intends such ambiguous forms of speech as are intended to raise mirth by dishonest and corrupt meanings. This, amongst some, passes for wit; but, in the judgement of the apostle, it is foolish talking; and, in the opinion of all wise and sober persons, it is rudeness and ill manners."

⁴ *Wholly improper.*] *εκ ανηκοντα* not convenient, "most disagreeable." Pyle; who refers to Rom. i. 28, which he says "ought to be so translated."—"which are greatly unbecoming, and highly displeasing to God." See ver. 11. Chandler. Mr. Wakefield, from Bowyer, supplies *κατα* before *τα*, and reads *ἡ ευτραπεία (κατα) τα ουκ ανηκοντα*, which he renders, "unseasonable levity, levity upon improper subjects."

⁵ *Graceful conversation.*] *ευχαρισία.* "*urbanitas et jucunditas in sermone temperata et honesta, gratia et honestas orationis, et opponitur τη μωρολογια.*" Schleusner; who refers to Xenophon. This forms a better opposition to the preceding vices than "thanksgiving." comp. ch. iv. 29. Chandler includes both senses in his exposition: "Endeavour to render your speech grateful and profitable to those you converse with; and abound in thanksgivings to God for all his mercies." See Col. iii. 15—17.

2. He plainly warns them that these vices utterly exclude from all the privileges of a Christian profession, and entail condemnation even upon the ignorant and idolatrous heathen, ver. 5—7. Ch. V.

For be assured of this, that no fornicator, or unchaste person, or lascivious libertine⁶, who is an idolater⁷, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God⁸. Let no man deceive you with vain words⁹, for because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the sons of disobedience¹⁰. Be not, therefore, associates with them. Ver. 5.
6.
7.

Do not, my brethren, make light of my advice, and think not that the crimes to which I have alluded can be made consistent with the Christian profession, or the Christian hope. I solemnly assure you that every violation of chastity, from cases which are commonly regarded as the least criminal, even to those of the greatest enormity, however connived at or tolerated, or even required, in the abominable rites of heathen deities, constitute an absolute exclusion from all the privileges of that holy community which God has been pleased to establish in the world, and of which Jesus is the holy and exalted head. There are, indeed, some who assume the character of lovers of wisdom, who will gravely argue in defence of these licentious practices. But

⁶ *Lascivious libertine.*] πλεονεκτης. See Locke; compare ver. 3. “one of excessive appetites.” Wakefield. There can be no doubt that the crime alluded to in this verse is the same that is mentioned in the third verse; and, from the connexion, it seems evident that the apostle alludes to these abominable impurities which were practised and avowed amongst the heathen, and which often even constituted a part of their sacred rites. “a man of such inordinate desires as an idolater is and must be. This sense is most agreeable to the apostle’s design.” Pyle.

⁷ *Who is an idolater.*] q. d. whatever such a profligate wretch may call himself, he is no Christian: he retains the very worst part of heathenism, and ought to be avoided by all sincere professors of Christianity, and to be excluded from the communion of the church. Archbishop Newcome explains the expression of “making riches his god;” so likewise Dr. Chandler; but this appears to me wide of the apostle’s meaning, which is, that these licentious practices are the very essence of idolatry, and the worst part of it.

⁸ *Of Christ, &c.*] Mr. Wakefield observes, “that the Æthiopic and Arabic versions omit και before Θεου,” and he renders the clause, “no fornicator, &c., can have an inheritance in the kingdom of the anointed teacher of God.”

⁹ *Vain words.*] “Suffer not yourselves to be imposed upon by the vain and false pretences of corrupt men, who may endeavour to persuade you that these vices may be indulged with safety.” Chandler; who observes that “the word means false and deceitful representations, void of solidity and truth.” Mr. Locke renders it, “empty talk;” and remarks, “One would guess by this that, as there were Jews who would persuade them that it was necessary for all Christians to observe the law of Moses, so there were others who retained so much of their ancient heathenism, as to endeavour to make them believe that these abominations were indifferent actions, not offensive to God, nor inconsistent with his worship.” Dr. Whitby, in his note upon this text, produces several authorities to show that fornication was approved and recommended by the heathen philosophers.

¹⁰ *Sons of disobedience*] “here, and in ch. ii. 2, and Col. iii. 6, are plainly the Gentiles, who refused to come in and submit themselves to the gospel.” Locke.

Ch. V.
Ver. 7.

beware of being deceived by their plausible and insidious harangues: they may make as light as they please of their infamous debaucheries, but let them know that they are not only forbidden under the severest penalties to professing Christians, but that they are inconsistent even with the law of nature, and justly entail the righteous vengeance of God on the heathen world. Be not, then, associates with them in their crimes, lest ye also partake with them in their punishments.

3. The light of the gospel requires a conduct that will bear inspection, and is absolutely inconsistent with those deeds of darkness and of shame which were the disgrace of the heathen world, ver. 8—12.

8. *For ye were formerly darkness¹, but now ye are light in the Lord²: walk as children of light.*

I press this advice upon you from the consideration of the happy change which has taken place in your moral state. Not long ago you were as ignorant of the character of God, of the requisitions of duty, and of the doctrine of immortality, as any of your poor unconverted neighbours. You were darkness itself; totally uninformed upon every topic of pure morality and true religion. You are now in a very different state. You are brought into marvellous light. By the revelation of the gospel you have been fully instructed, both with regard to your duties and your expectations. Let your conduct, then, correspond with your privileges. Live as Christians, and not as heathen.

9. *For the fruit³ of the light⁴ consisteth⁵ in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth⁶.*

If you are truly enlightened by the doctrine and governed by the spirit of the gospel, you will abound in acts of beneficence. You will be scrupulously

¹ *Darkness.*] See Col. i. 12, 13. "The kingdom of Satan over the Gentile world was a kingdom of darkness; and, to express the ignorance which the Gentiles were in, the apostle calls them 'darkness itself.'" Locke.

² *In the Lord.*] *q. d.* ye believing in, or instructed by, the Lord, are light, *i. e.* says Dr. Chandler, "ye are instructed in the knowledge of God and of true religion by the gospel of Christ." "The converts from heathenism are said to be called out of darkness into marvellous light in the Lord: *i. e.* as Christians." Newcome.

³ *For the fruit.*] "This parenthesis," says Mr. Locke, "serves to give us the literal sense of all that is here required by the apostle in this allegorical discourse of light."

⁴ *Light.*] The common reading is πνευματος, *spirit*, but φωτος, *light*, is authorized by the most approved manuscripts and versions; and it best suits the connexion, and is adopted by Griesbach and Newcome. See Macknight's note. The word *spirit* does not occur in this connexion, and is probably borrowed from Gal. v. 22.

⁵ *Consisteth.*] See Macknight.

⁶ *Goodness, &c.*] "universal goodness, justice, and veracity." Chandler.

exact in rendering to every one his due, inflexibly firm in your adherence to Ch. V.
truth, and inviolably faithful to all your engagements.

Searching out⁷ what is well pleasing to the Lord.

Ver. 10.

Being in possession of the best means of information, you will diligently study the doctrine of Christ, that you may learn the virtues of the Christian character, and may attain that purity of spirit which alone is acceptable to God, who is the searcher of hearts.

And participate not in the mischievous works⁸ of darkness, but rather even reprove them⁹. For it is indecent even to mention their secret practices¹⁰.

11.

12.

Far from joining in the lewd revels, the indecent language, and the licentious practices of your idolatrous neighbours, which are most hateful, and equally injurious to their bodies and their souls, rather seek every favourable opportunity to enter your protest against, and to testify your abhorrence of, these abominable vices. Discourage them, at least, by the sanctity of your example. They veil these odious practices under the sacred appellation of religious mysteries, into which none but the initiated are permitted to be introduced; and mysteries let them ever remain, for the infamy of their conduct upon these occasions is too gross, and too atrocious, to be described.

4. The Christian religion denounces shame upon the gross vices of heathen idolatry, and calls upon every one to renounce the works of darkness, and to walk in the light of the gospel, ver. 13, 14.

But all these things are discovered, being reprov'd by the light¹¹: for the

13.

⁷ *Searching out.*] δοκιμαζοντες. "giving proof." Wakefield.—"The most frequent signification of the original word," says Dr. Chandler, "is, to discern, or search out: sometimes it signifies to approve any thing when fully apprehended and discerned. In both senses it well suits the connexion."

⁸ *Mischievous works.*] αναρτοις "here signifies, not only unprofitable, but mischievous; as Rom. i. 28. 'Thus it answers to inutilis, which signifies mischievous in the best Latin authors.' Pyle. "destructive." Newcome; who adds, "We have the same litotes, ver. 4, 'which are not fit,' for, 'which are unfit and disgraceful.' See Rom. vi. 21."—"such as are attended with the most mischievous and destructive consequences." Chandler.

⁹ *Reprove them.*] Chandler observes, that "the original word signifies both to reprove and to convince. Christians ought to endeavour, by the light of a good conversation, to reprove the vices of their Gentile neighbours, that so they may convince them of the evil and danger of them."

¹⁰ *Secret practices.*] It is generally understood that there is a reference in these verses to the heathen mysteries; and Chandler observes, that "the word συγκαθιςτα is used by profane authors to denote a participation in their religious rites and mysteries." Dr. Whitby, in his note upon the text, produces authorities to prove that the Eleusinian and Bacchanalian mysteries were full of the most detestable iniquity. Dr. Doddridge remarks, from Saurin, "a sarcasm in this clause seldom attended to: as if it were insinuated here, they are called απορρητα, things not to be spoken of. True, says the apostle, they are properly so; things not too sacred, but too infamous, to be mentioned."

¹¹ *All these things, &c.*] So this clause is rendered and explained by Dr. Chandler: "All things, viz. which were done by the heathen in secret, were discovered, i. e. their moral turpi-

Ch. V.
Ver. 14.

light is that which discovereth every thing¹; therefore it saith², Awake, O sleeper! and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine upon thee.

But all these odious vices, so common in the heathen mysteries, so shamefully justified by the philosophers, so impudently practised by persons of all descriptions, and which so often constitute an essential part of idol worship, are now plainly proved to be disgraceful to human nature, and offensive to the divine purity. This important discovery is revealed by the gospel; the light of which now shines upon the benighted world, and exposes to just abhorrence and contempt those vices the malignant nature and pernicious tendency of which were not, under the darkness of heathenism, sufficiently apparent to mankind. Justly indeed may the evangelical doctrine be called light, since it makes the most important discoveries in the moral world, and so clearly reveals the duties and the expectations of man. And as a benignant angel, commissioned upon the kindest errand, it addresses itself in the most energetic language to those whose eyes are closed to the evidence and beauty of moral and religious truth, whose hearts are dead to every principle of virtue and piety, and who are buried in sensuality and vice, summoning them to awake from the slumbers of ignorance, calling upon them to rise from the death of sin, and inviting them to participate in the light, the life, and happiness of the gospel. And, blessed be God, this invitation is not always urged in vain.

5. The apostle recommends prudence, and that they should not unnecessarily provoke persecution, ver. 15—17.

tude, and the doers of them rendered ashamed, being reprov'd, *i. e.* demonstrated to be wicked and abominable by the light, *i. e.* by the Christian religion, or by the lustre of an unblameable and virtuous behaviour."

¹ *For the light, &c.]* Dr. Chandler renders the words, "it is the light which makes manifest every thing." An anonymous writer in Bowyer suggests the propriety of the transposition, *το γαρ παν φανερωμενον*. Mr. Wakefield translates this verse, "For all these things show themselves when convicted by the light, and whatever sheweth itself is become light;" *i. e.* as he explains it in the note, "is thereby brought to shame." He adds, "after all, this is to me one of the most difficult passages of scripture."

² *It saith.]* The words which follow are not to be found in the Old Testament. They are, however, commonly supposed to be an allusion to Isa. lx. 1, "Arise, shine! for thy light is come; for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." A writer in Bowyer supposes it to have been inserted from the margin. *Scaligerana*, p. 136. G. Syncellus in *Chron.* p. 27, says it is cited out of an apocryphal piece of the prophet Jeremiah. Chandler thinks it was some sentence spoken by Christ, though not recorded in the evangelical history. Archbishop Newcome supplies the words "*the Spirit sayeth*," and explains it as a declaration by the apostle immediately from God. Dr. Macknight says, that "the apostle by a rhetorical figure introduces the gospel as addressing an exhortation to the Gentiles, to awake out of the lethargy of sin;" and refers to Rom. x. 6 for a similar personification. This interpretation appears both just and beautiful, and it is adopted in the exposition.

See, therefore, that ye walk correctly³, not as unwise, but as wise, gaining time⁴, because the days are evil. Therefore be not inconsiderate⁵, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Ch. V.
Ver. 15, 16.
17.

You, my brethren, are in the number of those who have listened to the invitations of the gospel, and who walk in the light of Christ. Let me charge you to keep to the path of duty with the greatest accuracy and circumspection. Warn, admonish, instruct, and edify others by your example and conversation. Do not by any unguarded conduct expose yourselves or your cause to reproach, and give no unnecessary offence. Let the wisdom of the serpent be united with the simplicity of the dove. And by a prudent and conciliatory conduct, without a mean desertion of principle, adjourn as far as possible the season of persecution and peril. But in order to this, do not venture to join with your heathen neighbours in their mad and impious revels; for it would be far better to endure the severest torments their malice could inflict, than to be associates with them in their crimes. Consider, therefore, with yourselves how far you may with a safe conscience avoid giving offence, and how you may, consistently with your duty to God, forbear to provoke those evils which it will be sufficient to meet with fortitude, when they cannot be avoided consistently with integrity and honour.

6. Instead of intemperate revellings, the apostle recommends the love of virtue, pious hymns and thanksgivings, and a kind conciliatory conduct, ver. 18—21.

³ *Correctly.*] ἀκριβώς. “*exactly*, according to the evangelical rule.” Newcome.—“*accurately*,” Macknight and Doddridge. “with great exactness and care, so as neither to become partakers with the Gentiles in their crimes, nor to expose yourselves to their malice and anger by an imprudent rebuke of their very vices.” Chandler. “Walk correctly (Dr. Paley, *Hor. Paul.* p. 226), suiting yourselves to the difficulty and ticklishness of the times in which you live. When we advise a person to walk correctly, our advice is always given with a reference to the opinion of others.”

⁴ *Gaining time.*] So Chandler; and Macknight, who refers to Dan. ii. 8: “I know of a certainty that ye would gain time,” οὐ καὶ χρόνον εξαγοράζετε. “The English expression, ‘gaining time,’” says Dr. Chandler, “will take in the proper meaning of the apostle; especially as the original expression seems to refer to debtors who by some valuable consideration buy off the fixed time for the payment of their debts; or, as we say, gain further time for this purpose. When the apostle wrote, the time was extremely dangerous, and the profession of Christianity hazardous. What was the prudence requisite? It was to gain time, that the evils might not come upon them to which imprudence would certainly expose them. See Col. iv. 5.”

⁵ *Inconsiderate.*] ἀφρονες. “Yet, for the sake of this gaining time, do not become madmen, by joining the votaries of Bacchus in their frantic rites.” Macknight. Dr. Chandler also supposes an allusion to the feasts of Bacchus, and that the advice of the apostle is, that “they should not act like persons out of their minds, but as persons fully apprized of their interest and duty.”

q. d. Do not act without thought and understanding.”

Ch. V.
Ver. 18.

And be not intoxicated with wine, by which is dissoluteness¹, but be filled with the spirit².

Instead of joining in the bacchanalian revels of your idolatrous neighbours, and escaping from persecution by indulging yourselves, and countenancing them, in those excesses of intemperance which lead to every species of wickedness and debauchery, and which are absolutely inconsistent with your characters and hopes as Christians, drink deeply into the doctrine and spirit of the gospel, with which if you are thoroughly imbued, you will lead a life diametrically the reverse of that low and gross and contemptible character which I have just described, and will be formed to habits of purity, truth, and virtue.

19. *Speaking among yourselves psalms and hymns and spiritual odes³, sing-*
20. *ing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord. Giving thanks at all*
21. *times for all things⁴ in the name⁵ of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and*
21. *Father⁶. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ⁷.*

¹ *Dissoluteness.*] “*ασωτία*, ex *α* priv. et *σωω* servo, qui servari nequit, vita fœdissima et ad omnem turpitudinem abjecta.” Schleusner. See Wetstein N. T. vol. i. p. 758. “dissoluteness, riot, profligacy.” Harwood. “the habit of which vice shows that a man is so lost that he cannot be saved from present and final destruction without great difficulty.” Newcome.—“*Wherein is excess.* This rendering doth by no means come up to the force of St. Paul’s word, which signifies a wretched and abandoned disposition, the being lost to all virtue, and fit for the worst excesses and enormities, a perfect dissoluteness of mind and behaviour. So that the meaning of the advice is, Be not drunk with wine, because habitual drunkenness is an argument of a very dissolute and profligate temper; or because it leads to, and is the cause of, the most licentious and abandoned behaviour.” Chandler.—“in which is a shameful want of order.” Wakefield.

² *The spirit.*] “spiritual gifts.” Chandler. “with the grand discoveries of the gospel.” Macknight; more correctly. The attainment of spiritual gifts was not in their power.

³ *Speaking among yourselves psalms and hymns and spiritual odes.*] So Wakefield. Gr. “in psalms.” “in psalms, such as those of David, in hymns of praise to God, and in other songs dictated by the spirit.” Newcome. See 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 16. Probably the meaning is, that they were to entertain themselves and each other with hymns and anthems upon religious subjects, and particularly in praising God for his goodness in the Christian revelation, whether the compositions which they made use of were inspired or not. It is also supposed that responsive melodies are here alluded to. See Macknight.

⁴ *All things.*] Dr. Barrow interprets the expression as if the meaning were, Consider yourselves as appointed to return to God the tribute of praise due from the whole human race. See his *Works*, vol. i. p. 257: also Doddridge *in loc.*

⁵ *In the name.*] *i. e.* under the direction and authority of our Master Jesus Christ. We are to give thanks in the way in which we have been directed by Jesus Christ. The apostle does not mean to require that every act of prayer or thanksgiving should be concluded with the words *in the name of Christ*, as if there was some charm in that expression which would prevail upon God to grant what he might otherwise be inclined to withhold. “*Secundum voluntatem, ex præcepto Domini nostri Jesu Christi.*” Rosenmuller.

⁶ *To our God and Father.*] *τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ*, “to God, even the Father, or, our God and Father.” Newcome.—“to God the Father.” Wakefield. “The primitive Christians,” says Dr. Priestley, “were noted for their observance of this advice, being frequently employed in singing spiritual hymns and psalms. Singing consists chiefly in thanksgiving, and this you see is here directed to God through Christ; Christianity being the means by which glory is brought

Nor is the spirit of the gospel in the least degree inconsistent with innocent cheerfulness, but highly productive of it. And when your hearts are full of joy, arising from conscious integrity, and from the discoveries and hopes of the gospel, let your tongues express your gratitude and delight in responsive melodies; either using the language of those devotional compositions of which David and other pious harmonists have furnished us with so pleasing a variety; or, odes composed for the occasion, as every one's disposition and ability may prompt. Remembering, that sincerity is of more value in the estimation of God, than the finest poetry or the sublimest harmony; and that the most acceptable melody is a grateful heart. Give thanks to God, therefore, at all times for all things; for spiritual as well as temporal blessings, for adversity as well as prosperity. All is the appointment of God, all is intended for good; let all therefore be acknowledged with gratitude and praise. Give thanks to God likewise for his loving kindness to all men: praise him for the bounties of his providence, and for the riches of his grace to the whole family of mankind, and let a generous sympathy inspire the accents of gratitude. Let all be done according to the directions of our common Master Jesus Christ; who has taught us to address our religious homage, neither to himself nor to any other creature, but solely to that great and venerable Being who is his Father and our Father, his God and our God.

And as the best proof of your reverence for Christ as your Master, and of your gratitude to your God and Father, be kind one to another, and fulfill with affectionate solicitude the important duties of the various relations of social and domestic life.

to God. Here, as upon all other occasions, you see the supremacy of one God the Father, and the subordination of Christ, as well as of other prophets, to him, who is his God as well as ours, and his Father, or the author of his being, as well as ours."

[*The fear of Christ.*] This is the reading of the Alexandrine and many other manuscripts and versions of the best repute: it is received into the text by Griesbach, Wakefield, and Newcome. The common reading is, "the fear of God." The fear of Christ expresses that reverence which is due to his authority as a teacher sent from God.—"*Obsequium exhibite vobis invicem ex pietate (reverentia), erga Christum.*" Rosenmuller.

SECTION II.

Ch. V.

Exhortations to Relative Duties. Ch. v. 22—vi. 9.

I.

The apostle insists upon the duties of the conjugal relation, with a particular allusion to the case in which either of the parties was an unbeliever. Ch. v. 22—33.

1. The apostle prescribes the duty of the wife to the husband, ver. 22—24.

22. *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as the church¹ is to the Lord;*
 23. *for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the*
 24. *church: he is the protector of this his body². As the church, then, is sub-*
ject to Christ, so let wives be to their husbands in every thing³.

Fulfill with becoming attention the duties of the various relations of life. And, to begin with that which is the most important of all, the conjugal relation: Let it not be imagined that the profession of Christianity interferes in the least degree with the social and civil duties; on the contrary, it enforces them more strongly and by peculiar motives. Let not Christian wives, even though united to unbelieving husbands, think themselves authorized to relax in that respectful attention to them which the laws and customs of society require, and which they have been accustomed to show. Let them regard the relation in which they stand to their husbands, as similar to that of the

¹ *As the church.*] An anonymous writer in Bowyer suggests ἡ ἐκκλησία, *the church*, as the word proper to be supplied between ὡς and τῷ κυρίῳ. And as it best agrees with the strain of the argument, I have introduced it into the translation. Dr. Chandler observes, that “the submission here required is that which flows from sincere affection and love: for such is the submission we pay to Christ, and this is all a wise and good man will desire, and which no prudent and religious woman will ever refuse.”

² *This his body:*] “i. e. the church.” Newcome.

³ *In every thing.*] “This,” says Archbishop Newcome, “is to be limited by reason. It is observable that when St. Paul inculcates submission to civil magistrates, he avoids expressing himself so strongly.” “The church’s subjection to Christ,” Dr. Chandler observes, “is founded in gratitude; and results from that protection which he grants it, and those blessings which he confers upon it. And from hence it follows, that if the husband be defective in his care of the wife, and refuses her that tenderness, protection, friendship, and support, which the matrimonial relation gives her a claim to, the husband so far vacates the reasons and obligations of that submission which he might otherwise reasonably expect from her, and which an obliged virtuous wife would gladly pay him.”

church to Christ. He is to the church what the head is to the body: so likewise is the husband to the wife: and as the church, instructed, protected, and cherished by Christ, yields a ready obedience to his mild and wise and beneficial precepts; so while the husband, though an unbeliever, continues to conduct himself with becoming tenderness and affection, and to exercise only that mild authority which the laws and manners of society warrant, and which in certain cases may be expedient, let the wife submit to his direction and yield to his authority in all cases in which she is not restrained from it by duties of superior obligation.

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Ver. 24.

It may be proper to observe here, that the apostle's directions are better suited to the state of society and manners in the East, where the female sex then were, and still are, kept under an undue and ungenerous restraint, than to the more enlightened views and more polished manners of European countries and modern times; and they are by no means to be regarded as obligatory in their strict and literal meaning. Good sense, good temper, good manners, mutual affection and sincere piety, will regulate the conduct of persons in the married state toward each other, far better than any specific precepts.

2. The apostle enjoins upon the husband to show regard and tenderness, even to an unbelieving wife, similar to that which Christ has manifested towards the church, ver. 25—27.

Husbands, love your wives⁴, even as Christ loved the church⁵, and gave himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, having purified it by the washing of water and by the word⁶, that he himself⁷ might present the church

25.

26.

27.

⁴ *Husbands, &c.*] “These precepts concerning relative duties,” says Dr. Chandler, “evidently relate to such persons as were of different religions. Lest women who were converted to Christianity should imagine they were discharged from the obligations and duties of the matrimonial contract towards their husbands, if they were either Jews or heathens, the apostle commands them to live in a reasonable subjection to them. And lest the husband, when converted, should hate or endeavour to divorce his wife, if Jewish or pagan, the apostle commands him to treat her with the tenderest affection, and by methods of kindness to endeavour to reclaim and purify her from the superstitions of judaism or the idolatries of paganism.”

⁵ *As Christ, &c.*] “As Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, *i. e.* might reform men from superstitious idolatries and vices, and separate them to himself to be his peculiar people, so ought men tenderly to love their heathen or Jewish wives, that thus by kindness and affection they might prove the means of their sanctification and conversion to Christ.” Chandler.

⁶ *And by the word.*] So the Syriac: see Newcome. By the word they had been instructed in the Christian faith; by the washing of water in baptism they had made profession of it; and by both united they were purified and sanctified, *i. e.* openly separated from the unbelieving world. “*Εν ῥήματι optime vertitur per doctrinam, et conjungitur cum verbis, ἵνα αὐτὴν ἁγιάσῃ.*”

Nam

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Ver. 27.

to himself, glorious¹, not having blemish or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be holy and unblameable.

Let not husbands whose wives are unbelievers think themselves authorized to neglect them, or treat them unkindly, on that account. This ignorance of truth, this alienation from God, is their great calamity: let them be regarded with a generous tenderness and pity. So Christ loved the Gentile church, and pitied it in its heathen state; not because of its merits, but of its wretchedness. And, moved by disinterested compassion, he made a voluntary sacrifice of himself for it, in order first to separate it from the unbelieving world by the rite of baptism and the public profession of religion, and then to purify it by the efficacy of his doctrine: intending thereby to cleanse it completely from every moral stain, to make it resplendent in the beauty of holiness, and to prepare and qualify it for its high and honourable destiny of an intimate and everlasting union to him. Thus let Christians who are connected in the conjugal relation with unbelievers by no means think themselves at liberty to withdraw from them, but, after the example of Christ, let them spare no pains to promote their conversion, to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, and to form them to the temper and spirit of the gospel; which will be the surest pledge of mutual happiness both here and hereafter.

3. The apostle enforces his exhortation by an allusion to the account given in the Jewish scriptures of the first formation of the woman, ver. 28—32.

28. *Husbands ought so to love their wives as their own bodies. He that*
29. *loveth his wife, loveth himself². For no one ever hated his own flesh; but*

Nam per doctrinam, quam discimus, emendamus, reddimur pii, et abstrahimur a vitiis. Καθαρίσας κ. τ. λ. postquam nos aquæ lavacro abluit. Rosenmuller. *q. d.* that he might sanctify it by his word, *i. e.* doctrine, after having purified it by the washing of water. Upon his profession of faith, the converted heathen is baptized and admitted into the Christian community, and by his continued attendance upon the Christian doctrine he gradually becomes thoroughly instructed and reformed.

¹ *That he himself.*] The Alexandrine, Clermont, and other manuscripts and versions read *αυτος* for *αυτην*. This is also the reading of the Coptic, Italic, and Vulgate versions, and is adopted by Locke, Griesbach, and Newcome. “*Ενδοξον, quicquid nitet: σπιλος, macula in facie, vel vestimentis. ρυτίδες, rugæ.*” Rosenmuller. “The apostle (says Mr. Locke), to recommend to husbands love and tenderness to their wives, in imitation of Christ’s affection to the church, shows, that whereas other brides take care to spruce themselves and to set off their persons with all manner of neatness and cleanness, to recommend themselves to their bridegrooms, Christ himself, at the expense of his own pains and blood, purified and prepared for himself his spouse the church, that he might present it to himself without spot or wrinkle.”

² *Glorious: a church, &c.*] This punctuation is preferred by Chandler and Macknight: they both suppose an allusion to Ps. xlv. 13.

³ *Loveth himself.*] There is no doubt an allusion here to the account given of the formation

nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ the church. For we are members of his body; we are of his flesh, and of his bones³. Accordingly⁴, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall adhere to his wife, and they two shall be one person. This mystery is great⁵; yet I affirm it in reference to Christ, and the church.

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31.

32.

of the woman out of the man, Gen. ii. 21—25; which, whether it is to be understood literally or figuratively, as a fact or as a fable, was equally suitable to the apostle's purpose. He alludes to it as a known story.

³ *Of his flesh, &c.*] An unquestionable allusion to the words of Adam, Gen. ii. 24, 'This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' The church is a part of Christ's mystical person, as the woman of the person of the first man. "The apostle," says Mr. Locke, "had here two things in view: the one was, to press men to love their wives, by the example of Christ's love to his church; and the force of that argument lay in this, that a man and his wife were one flesh, as Christ and his church were one; but this being a truth of the greater consequence, though an incident, he subjoins the reason, *Because we are members of his body, &c.* These words, from Gen. ii. 23, in his concise way he understands both of Christ and the church. He then goes on with Gen. ii. 24, which makes their being one flesh the reason why a man was more strictly to be united to his wife than to his parents or any other relation."

⁴ *Accordingly.*] ἀντὶ τούτου "answerably to this." Doddridge. The apostle's analogy seems to be this: As the woman was part of the body of the man, so is the church the body of Christ. And still further: As, in consequence of this formation of the woman, the matrimonial connexion is represented as the most indissoluble of all relations, such also is the relation between Christ and his church. Nothing must separate them.

⁵ *This mystery is great.*] "This," says Dr. Chandler, "is the natural order of the words." The sense of them it is not easy to ascertain. It seems to me that the apostle is pursuing his analogy, *q. d.* The indissoluble nature of the matrimonial bond is a considerable difficulty, and seems liable to some objection: nevertheless, ἐγὼ δὲ, I apply it in its utmost extent to the union between Christ and the church; this must never be dissolved. No professing Christian must apostatize from the faith, nor will Christ ever discard his genuine disciples. The apostle here follows the turn of his mind, probably owing to his pharisaic education, to pursue analogies from the Old Testament. There is no reason to suppose that any such figurative meaning was originally intended in the narrative in Genesis; still less to admit, with Mr. Locke, that the apostle was inspired to interpret these passages. Some persons understand the mystery to relate to the eternal Son of God becoming incarnate. But this is far from the apostle's purpose. The Vulgate version renders the text, "marriage is a great sacrament;" and upon this text found their doctrine, that marriage is one of the seven sacraments. But this is a palpable error.

"This mystery," says Dr. Chandler, "this secret union of persons by matrimonial affection, is great, and it is called a mystery, from the indissoluble union which that matrimony constitutes; and because the tenderness of conjugal affection, when sincere, is such as no words can describe. The Papists, from this passage, would fain prove matrimony to be a sacrament; whereas μυστήριον never signifies in the New Testament a sacrament, but something that either was or is a secret; and therefore can never agree to the nature of a Christian sacrament."

Hoc mysterium vocat grave. Operæ pretium esse, inquit Paulus, has res invicem conferre, cogitare quomodo unum sub altero lateat. Hoc et similibus locis, Paulus imitatus est Judæorum interpretandi modum mysticum, quo, cum persona, historia, ritibus, comparatur simul res alia, quæ per illa illustretur. Inde scriptor allegoricus dici solet etiam mysticus. Non opus est ut nos Pauli exemplo hunc modum interpretandi imitemur, nobis enim non est res cum Judæis, quorum ingenio nos accommodare debeamus." Rosenmüller.

"This mystery is great: *q. d.* This truth, which revelation has opened to us, is great. I mean, that Christ should leave the glory which he had with the Father, and should join himself to his spouse the church." Newcome. Dr. Doddridge is still more confident: "The mystery certainly was, that the eternal Son of God, receiving the degenerate race of man into an union with himself," &c. Surely nothing but attachment to a favourite system could ever have induced

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Ver. 32.

You have read in the Jewish scriptures, that the woman was formed from a rib taken out of the side of the man, Gen. ii. 21. Now, whether this account be history or fable, it teaches the important truth that the conjugal relation is the most intimate and indissoluble that can subsist in the world; and that persons in the married state should consider themselves as one and the same in person, in spirit, in affection, in feeling, in design, and in conduct; it is therefore as unnatural for a man to be unkind and cruel to his wife, as it would be to see him tearing and mangling his own flesh. A man who loves his wife, loves himself; while he contributes to her ease and comfort, he contributes to his own. Here, likewise, the analogy applies to Christ and the church; the church is Christ's mystical body, which he regards as a constituent part of himself; which, therefore, he protects, nourishes, and comforts. As Adam is said to have called Eve 'bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh,' so may Christ be regarded as speaking of the church. And as it is said of man, that he shall forego all other relations in order to form an indissoluble connexion with the female of his choice, so the connexion between Christ and his church is equally paramount and indissoluble. You may think this doctrine strange, but I assure you that it is true. And they who have once entered into the Christian covenant must no more think of receding, than a man can recede from his marriage vow.

4. The apostle concludes this branch of his subject with a general exhortation to conjugal virtue, ver. 33.

33. *However¹, let each of you, individually, so love his wife as himself, and let the wife reverence her husband.*

To return from this digression, and to drop the allegory, what I mean to recommend is, that each party should be strictly attentive to the duties of the conjugal relation, whether the other party be a Christian or an unbeliever. Let the husband, by kind and generous behaviour, win over the unbelieving wife to the profession of a religion which breathes the spirit of love; and let

these learned and pious writers to have given an interpretation to the apostle's language, to which neither the words themselves nor the context afford the slightest countenance.

¹ *However.*] *πλὴν* q. d. Dropping the allegory altogether, the sum and substance of my advice is this, &c. "I speak of the sacred and strict union there is between him (Christ), and the members of it, (the church,) only that you may every one of you apply it to each other. *πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς*, only that you may apply it to yourselves, each one of you." Chandler. "Enimvero, particula transeundi, Ut ad rem redeam. Nam sensum illum allegoricum obiter tantum attingere voluit." Rosenmuller. "However, not to enlarge on this truth respecting Christ, let us, &c. See Phil. iii. 16." Newcome.

the dutiful behaviour of the Christian wife prove to the unbelieving husband that the profession of Christianity, while it strictly enforces all other duties, does not diminish that respectful deference which the laws and customs of society require from an affectionate and faithful wife to a kind and virtuous husband.

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Ver. 33.

II.

The apostle inculcates filial and parental duties, especially in cases where either of the parties were unbelievers, ch. vi. 1—4.

1. He represents the duties of children, and particularly to unbelieving parents, ver. 1—3.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord², for this is just³.

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Ver. 1.

The disciples of Moses, whose attachment to legal rites and rigours, and whose zeal for making proselytes is unbounded, teach that conversion to their system is a dissolution of all the bonds of civil society, and even of nature; so that parents and children are as entirely released from all the peculiar duties of those endearing relations, to those who remain in a heathen state, as if they were entire strangers to each other. Far different is the spirit and the doctrine of the Christian dispensation. Instead of relaxing, it enforces the duties of every relation by the most powerful and engaging motives. Let children, therefore, obey their parents; and particularly let those young persons, whose parents are not yet converted to the faith, yield to them the same respectful and dutiful obedience which that honourable and endearing relation naturally claims; except in those cases where obedience to the parent would be inconsistent with the allegiance which they owe to Christ. It is just that children should obey their parents thus far, because they are under great

² *In the Lord.*] εν κυριω. "by virtue of his command, and as far as they could consistently with the obligations of their Christian profession." Chandler. These words are wanting in the Clermont and some other very ancient manuscripts, and have much the appearance of a marginal gloss. In the parallel passage, Col. iii. 20, they are placed at the end of the sentence. Dr. Chandler understands the advice as given to the converted children of unbelieving parents, that they might not think themselves exempt from filial duty. The Jews represented proselytism to their religion as dissolving the bonds of natural relation. "*Transgressi in more eorum idem usurpant: nec quicquid prius imbuuntur quam contemnere divos; exuere patriam; parentes, liberos, fratres, vilia habere.*" Tacitus Hist. v. 7. It is not improbable that the Judaizing teachers might inculcate a similar doctrine, which would make it peculiarly proper for the apostle to enter his protest against it, and strongly to press upon new converts the discharge of relative and social duties. See Dr. Jennings's *Jewish Antiquities*, b. i. ch. 3.

³ *This is just.*] "It is reasonable in itself, independent of any law of God, it being the dictate of nature, and for the general good, that till persons come to the full use of their own reason, they should be under the direction of that of their parents, who are responsible for them." Priestley.

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Ver. 1.

obligations to them for past care and kindness ; because, in general, the prudence and experience of the parent is much superior to that of the child ; and because such behaviour may induce the unbelieving parent to inquire into the evidence of a doctrine which produces such beneficial effects. But that obedience to parents is to be limited by the paramount authority of Christ, is also just ; for Christ is the messenger of God, and it is right to obey God rather than man.

2. *This is the first commandment with a promise¹ : Honour thy father and*
3. *thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long in the land.*

That obedience to parents is peculiarly acceptable to God, may be inferred from the eminent distinction which this precept obtains among those commandments which the finger of God engraved upon the tables of stone. The precept which requires children to love, obey, and in case of need to support, their aged parents, is the only one to which a specific promise is annexed ; namely, long life in the land of Canaan. And this shows how little reason the Jewish zealots have for teaching, that proselytism supersedes the duties of natural relations. And though temporal blessings are not the proper objects of evangelical promise, yet be assured that, as nothing is more acceptable to God than filial piety, so there is no virtue that has a more direct tendency to secure peace, reputation, and prosperity in life.

2. The apostle gives directions to parents for their conduct towards children, especially if they are unbelievers, ver. 4.

4. *And, ye parents, do not exasperate² your children, but educate them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord³.*

¹ *This is the first commandment, &c.]* I follow Mr. Wakefield, in placing this clause at the beginning of the sentence. It is justly observed that the meaning is, that this is the first, and indeed the only, commandment in the decalogue which hath any "special and appropriated promise ;" the promise in the second commandment being of a general nature : "to all who love God and keep his commandments." See Newcome. Exod. xx. 6. "ἐντολή πρώτη videtur potius esse, primum præceptum, unum e præcipuis, vel ad fructum, vel ad necessitatem observandi." Rosenmuller.

² *Do not exasperate, &c.]* "If converted Christian parents had children that seemed averse to the faith of Christ," says Dr. Chandler, "they were not to treat them with severity, nor to exasperate them by an unkind and harsh behaviour, because this might tend to prejudice them against Christianity itself."

³ *The discipline, &c.]* Wakefield. "παιδεία est disciplina, seu morum gubernatio, ut ex παιδεία Cyri apparet." Raphelius. "Νεθετειν est τον νεν ευθετειν, τον νεν καλως η ορθως τιθεναι : επανορθεν, monere mitius, vel severius, acriter redarguere et reprehendere, immo, pæna afficere." Kypke apud Newcome. "παιδεία, omnis institutio et disciplina puerilis, sive illa fiat institutione in literis, sive morum et animi informatione ad honesta quævis exemplo, admonitionibus, beneficiis

Let not parents behave harshly and unkindly to their children; and particularly let not Christian parents think themselves authorized to treat with peculiar severity those who are not yet converted to the faith. Harsh behaviour and violent language will exasperate rather than convince. If they wish that their children should become true disciples of Jesus, let them mildly instruct them in the principles of Christian doctrine, and the evidences of the Christian faith, so as to enlighten their understandings and to bring conviction to their reason; and by wise and gentle, but firm, discipline, let them restrain their children from the vices of heathenism, and train them up to the practice and habit of Christian virtue.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 4.

III.

The apostle enforces the mutual duties of masters and servants, or bondmen, ver. 5—9.

1. The duties of believing servants to unbelieving masters are strongly represented and enforced, ver. 5—8.

*Bond-servants*⁴, be obedient to your earthly masters⁵, with reverential fear⁶, in the integrity⁷ of your heart, as unto Christ⁸.

5.

Let not those whom the state and laws of society have placed in the degraded and unhappy condition of bondmen and slaves, imagine that Christianity is intended to operate any immediate change in their civil state or social duties. The benevolent principles and liberal spirit of the doctrine of

et pœnis. νουθεσια, admonitio, disciplina, qua alterum ad meliorem mentem revocare studemus." Schleusner. "The apostle exhorts parents to treat children as rational creatures, and not with that harshness and severity which was common with the ancients, who had a power over their children which the humanity of modern laws does not permit. But they were to be more especially careful to instruct their children in the principles of religion, this being a thing of more consequence to them than any thing else they could do for them." Priestley.

⁴ *Bond-servants.*] "δουλος," says Dr. Chandler, "is, properly, a slave; and, lest slaves converted to Christianity should imagine that they were discharged from their subjection to their masters because they were become by faith the freed men of Christ, the apostle enjoins upon them the most exemplary obedience."

⁵ *Earthly masters.*] In the original, "according to the flesh." "in opposition (says Archbishop Newcome) to their religious master, Christ." Mr. Wakefield translates it, "your worldly masters."

⁶ *Reverential fear.*] literally, *fear and trembling*. See Worsley's translation. "i. e. with diligence and earnestness." Newcome. "with that fear and dread of their displeasure which becomes your state of slavery and subjection." Chandler. The same expression occurs Phil. ii. 12; it seems to be a proverbial phrase. "*summa cum reverentia.*" Rosenmuller.

⁷ *Integrity,*] or, 'in singleness of heart.' "This virtue," says Dr. Newcome, "is opposed to that deceit and duplicity for which slaves were remarkable."

⁸ *Unto Christ.*] The Alexandrine and some other manuscripts, and the Coptic version, here read 'the Lord.' See Griesbach.

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Ver. 5.

Jesus will indeed, in due time, abolish slavery, and put an end to all unjust and arbitrary rule which man exercises over his fellow man. In the mean time, let the Christian slave yield obedience to his heathen master, not only from terror and the dread of punishment, but with the same uprightness and sincerity with which he obeys the precepts of his heavenly master Christ.

6. *Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers¹, but as bond-servants of Christ,*
7. *doing the will of God from the heart²; performing service with good-will as to the Lord³, and not to men.*

Let not Christian servants behave as the heathen are often known to do: being active and diligent under their master's eye, to excite his attention and to gain his favour, but idle and vicious when they can be so with impunity. Let them perform their duty faithfully, considering the lawful requisitions of their masters as the requisitions of Christ, whose command it is that they should be obeyed; and to obey Christ is to do the will of God, whose servant and messenger he is. Obey your heathen masters, therefore, from a sense of duty to God, whose notice you can never escape. Let, then, your obedience be not only exact and faithful, but benevolent and cheerful; and whatever you do for the service of your master, regard it as done for the service of Christ, who will not suffer you to go without a proper remuneration.

8. *Knowing that whatever good work any man doeth, he will receive it from the Lord, whether he be a slave⁴ or a free-man.*

Your unbelieving and unjust masters may sometimes govern you with the rod of oppression; and, instead of expressing approbation, or allowing a pro-

¹ *Eye-service, &c.*] Dr. Doddridge observes, that "Grotius takes notice of the elegance of the compound words made use of here in the original, which our translators have endeavoured to imitate. But as the Greek abounds more in such compound words than any other language, so the apostle Paul has frequently introduced them into his writings with a peculiar elegance and beauty, of which the best translation must, in many instances, fall very short." Rom. ii. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 14; Col. ii. 4; 1 Tim. i. 6; 2 Tim. i. 6, ii. 15.

² *From the heart.*] "ἐκ ψυχῆς, lubenter, sed tanquam ingenui Christiani, qui lubenter præceptis Dei obsequuntur." Rosenmuller.

³ *As to the Lord.*] i.e. "Respicientes præcipue non illos homines, quorum servi estis, sed Christum, qui id exigit, et qui præmium reddit." Rosenmuller.

⁴ *A slave.*] "These slaves were the property of their masters; and some of these being treated, upon their conversion to Christianity, as rational beings by the apostles and their fellow Christians, were more sensible of the yoke of servitude; and there were not wanting in those days who told them that their masters had no right to hold them in that abject state. To this doctrine they were too ready to give ear. But the apostle, sensible of what disservice this would be to the Christian cause, urges upon Christian slaves to render to their masters all the services that were required of them; and even to do it more cheerfully, as now lying under an additional obligation to the performance of every duty, being servants of God and of Christ, who would reward their obedience here in a better state hereafter." Priestley.

per recompense for your fidelity and diligence, they may treat you with insult and cruelty. Let not this discourage you: least of all let it induce you to neglect your duty. You must habitually regard yourselves as the servants of Christ; he is your true master: and none of his servants, whatever their rank and condition may be, shall go without his due reward: nor shall the lowest act of duty fail of its corresponding recompense. Let no consideration, therefore, tempt you to neglect the duties of your humble and laborious station; and let your character exhibit to all around you the efficacy of Christian principles, and the triumph of Christian hopes.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 8.

2. The apostle gives advice to Christian masters, ver. 9.

And ye, masters, deal equitably⁵ with them, forbearing threats⁶; knowing that their and your⁷ master also is in heaven; with whom is no respect of persons.

9.

Let Christian masters act justly and equitably towards their heathen slaves; and let them not imagine that they are to be treated with undue severity because they are of a different religion. As men, they possess the feelings and claim the rights of humanity. Abstain from harsh and reproachful language, and do not threaten severe punishments for trivial faults. Or if, in the heat of resentment, you may have let fall an unguarded threat, beware of executing the injustice you have denounced. These poor and friendless wretches may not, perhaps, be able to revenge the injuries they receive; but your religion teaches you that they have a protector in heaven, at whose tribunal both you and they will soon appear, who is equally the sovereign both of the master and the slave; and who will administer justice with an impartial hand. Be merciful, therefore, and you shall obtain mercy.

⁵ *Deal equitably.*] τα αὐτὰ ποιεῖτε. Mr. Wakefield understands the words in the same sense as ἰσοότης, Col. iv. 1, and renders them "deal equally." Dr. Chandler explains the precept, "act by them in the like manner; i. e. with a benevolent and friendly mind, and out of regard to the will and example of Christ."

⁶ *Forbearing threats.*] ἀνιέντες "moderating threatening." Macknight. Neither uttering unjust threats, nor executing them when uttered.

⁷ *Their and your.*] αὐτῶν καὶ ὑμῶν this is the reading of the Alexandrine, Clermont, and other manuscripts, and of the Vulgate version. See Griesbach. "The apostle," says Dr. Priestley, "gives proper admonition to masters to forbear that rigorous and inhuman treatment of slaves which was too common in that age. There were some slaves of better condition, who managed their masters' most confidential affairs; many of whom were persons of good education. Of this superior class there were many converts to Christianity. But the common labouring slaves were treated in much the same manner as slaves are now treated in the West Indies. We do not find any express precept in the scriptures against the practice of slavery. But the general maxims of Christianity are particularly applicable to this case, especially that golden

SECTION III.

Ch. VI. *THE APOSTLE, in language highly figurative, cautions his readers against the pernicious errors of seducing and artful teachers, against which he advises them to fortify themselves by a firm adherence to the doctrine and the spirit of the gospel. Ch. vi. 10—20.*

1. The apostle warns them of the necessity of a firm attachment to the gospel, in all its extent, as the best guard against the artifices of seducing teachers, ver. 10, 11.

Ver. 10. *As to what remains, my brethren, strengthen yourselves in the Lord, and*
 11. *in his mighty power¹; put on the complete armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the artifices of the slanderer².*

I cannot conclude this epistle without warning you earnestly and faithfully of a dangerous and artful enemy, against whom it is highly requisite that you should be continually upon your guard; and for an encounter with whom you must be well prepared. Confirm yourselves, therefore, in your Christian principles; in those principles which you have received as the doctrine of Christ, and which have been proved to be such by the miraculous powers of the missionaries by whom they have been taught. Arm yourselves, therefore, at all points with the doctrine and the spirit of the gospel, and you will easily detect the sophistry and repel the attacks of those who would corrupt the simplicity

rule, of doing to others as we would have others do to us. It is indeed true that the mild spirit of Christianity has greatly contributed to abolish slavery in this western part of the world; and it is not doubted but that, in time, its happy influence will be felt every where, to the abolishing of slavery universally."

¹ *Strengthen, &c.] i. e. establish yourselves in the doctrine of Christ, which has been confirmed by miracles, the works of extraordinary and supernatural power. Dr. Chandler paraphrases the text, q. d. "Be ye established and confirmed in your Christian profession; and fortify your minds with all those helps and assistances which the Lord, or the gospel of Christ, furnishes you with." The other interpretation is better suited to the context.*

² *The slanderer.] τὸ διαζόλον, the devil. So the public and most other versions: applying it to the supposed leader of evil spirits. Accuser. Wakefield. "the insidious artifice of the false accuser." Harwood. That the apostle is here cautioning his readers against the artifices of the judaizing teachers, by which they endeavoured to corrupt the Christian doctrine, by blending it with the ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual, is sufficiently evident from the context; and that these teachers were justly entitled to the name of διαζόλοι, or slanderers, is notorious both from Luke's history, and Paul's epistles: especially those to the Galatians and Corinthians.*

of the Christian faith, and who calumniate the characters of its most enlightened teachers. Ch. VI.

2. Under highly figurative language, the apostle describes the characters of the enemies of truth, ver. 12, 13.

For your conflict³ is not only⁴ with blood and flesh⁵, but with principalities, with powers, with the rulers of this dark world⁶, with spiritual wic- Ver. 12.

³ *Your conflict.*] *ὑμῶν* is the reading of the Clermont manuscript, and of some others of good authority, and is marked by Griesbach as well supported, though not admitted into his text. *παλη, wrestling.* "Plutarch tells us that wrestling was the most artful and subtle of all the ancient games, and that it was derived from a word which signifies to throw a man down by deceit and craft. Persons who understand this exercise have many fetches and turns, and changes of posture, which they make use of to supplant and trip up their adversaries. And it is with great justice that a state of persecution is compared with it." Chandler.

Macknight observes, that the word here must signify *fighting*: for instead of being clad in armour, the Greeks always wrestled naked.

⁴ *Not only, &c.*] This is one instance amongst many of that idiom of the Hebrew language in which an absolute negation is used when inferiority only is intended. Your conflict is not with flesh and blood: that is, not only, or, chiefly. Other instances are numerous. See Matt. xii. 7; 1 Cor. i. 17. See Macknight's *Prelim. Ess.*, No. 4, p. 97. He states it as a form of the comparative degree.

⁵ *Not with blood and flesh, but with principalities, &c.*] "our conflict is not barely with men, but with principalities," &c. Locke; who adds in his note, that "principalities and powers are put here, it is visible, for those revolted angels which stood in opposition to the kingdom of God." Such is Mr. Locke's interpretation, and with him run the whole mass of commentators with very few exceptions. It is unfortunate that this excellent critic did not upon this occasion recollect his own judicious observations upon ch. i. 10, where he interprets the very same expressions, of the "government of those who ruled by the law of Moses." Dr. Chandler explains the words *blood and flesh* as expressing "men of low degree, in opposition to the powerful, rich, and mighty." Dr. Harwood's version is, "For we combat not merely with the vices and prejudices of private individuals, but we have to conflict with all the confederate and united powers of grand and potent establishments, both civil and religious, which are supported by the sovereigns and rulers of this benighted age."

This makes an excellent sense, well suited to the connexion and to the apostle's design. Perhaps, however, we shall approximate more nearly to the true meaning of the apostle, if, by taking the words *principalities, powers, &c.* in the sense in which they are used ch. i. 21, as meaning the Jewish hierarchy, and zealots for the law in general, we should understand its correlative, *blood and flesh*, as expressing heathen idolaters, and opposers of the gospel. See Heb. xii. 4. The contrast then will be, not between wicked men and wicked angels, according to the common opinion, nor, between men of low degree and men in power, according to Dr. Chandler and Dr. Harwood, but between the power and prejudices of heathen idolaters, and those of Jewish rulers and zealots for the law; not excluding the judaizing Christians, who created so much uneasiness to the apostle and to the Gentile believers.

This interpretation is countenanced by Mr. Wakefield; and it gives a clear and consistent sense to this difficult and highly figurative passage: whereas the common interpretation, though supported by great names, is in truth totally unintelligible, and would appear so to every person of reflection, if, as in many other cases, its absurdity had not been veiled by its familiarity. For how can frail and feeble mortals be prepared to encounter with hosts of *revolted angels*, even supposing such beings to have a real existence?

⁶ *Rulers of this dark world.*] The words *τῶν αἰώνων* are unnecessary, and are omitted, as Archbishop Newcome observes, upon sufficient authority. "*Κοσμοκρατωρ, mundi dominus.* Eph. vi. 12. *qui locus ab aliis, de doctoribus aut principibus Judæorum, ab aliis, vero, de geniis malis*

Ch. VI.
Ver. 13.

*kedness*¹ in heavenly places. *Wherefore, take up the complete armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in this evil day, and having subdued every thing*², to stand.

The caution I have suggested to you is not superfluous; for I solemnly announce to you who have embraced the Christian faith, and who are desirous of maintaining it in its primitive purity, that you are engaged in a very arduous and perilous conflict, which will require the constant exertion of your best vigilance and skill to maintain your ground and to secure the victory. And do not imagine that I am here speaking of a personal combat between man and man, which, except in very extraordinary circumstances, is at all times inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel; nor yet do I refer particularly to the opposition to which you will be exposed, in your attempts to propagate the gospel, from heathen prejudices and heathen power: the struggle to which I chiefly allude, is that which you will have to maintain against those who would resist the progress, or corrupt the purity, of the Christian faith. I have before reminded you that you are, in a sense, risen with Christ, and are exalted with him into the community of the sons of God without submitting to the yoke of the law, and that this has been so clearly made out to the Jewish leaders, that the greatest zealots could not deny it: see Eph. i. 21. These, therefore, and especially those sects and orders of men who are by profession most zealously and blindly attached to the Mosaic ritual, and to oral tradition, are full of the bitterest malignity against the gospel and its professors, and will leave no effort untried to pervert your principles and to seduce you from the faith: and some even of those who pro-

explicatur, a quibus hæc sublunaria gubernari credebant Judæi superstitiosi. Utrique explicationi favet usus loquendi. Schleusner. The state of the Jews at that time may justly be called a state of darkness, as their inveterate prejudices blinded their eyes against the light of the gospel.

¹ *Spiritual wickedness, &c.*] In the original, “the spiritual things of wickedness;” “which,” says Dr. Chandler, “may signify, either apostate spirits, or, what I rather incline to think, the wicked and perverse corrupters of the Christian doctrine.” Christians are called πνευματικοί: the natural adversaries to these are πνευματικά της πονηρίας, *spiritual wickednesses*; men who, pretending to the spirit, endeavoured to corrupt the simplicity of the faith. See Rev. xviii. 2, xvi. 14; 1 John iv. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 1. Mr. Wakefield’s translation is, “For we have not only to wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the authority, against the powers, against the rulers of this dark age, against the wickedness of spiritual men in a heavenly dispensation:” i. e. as he explains it in his notes, “against Jewish governors, who have a dispensation of religion from heaven, as well as against heathen magistrates, under the darkness of superstition and idolatry.”

² *Subdued every thing.*] “and having vanquished them, to maintain your ground.” Harwood; who produces several passages from Dionysius Halicarnassensis, to prove that the verb καταργάζω often signifies to vanquish or dispatch an enemy.

ness the Christian religion discover the same malignant opposition to the enlarged and liberal spirit of the gospel, and would bend the necks of their fellow-Christians under the yoke of the ceremonial law. These are the enemies, to oppose whom with success, it is necessary for you to gird on the whole armour of the gospel, by which alone you will be able to repel their hostile and insidious attacks; and, having vanquished them all, to stand your ground, and to approve yourselves as good soldiers of your glorious chief.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 13.

3. He describes the armour which the gospel furnishes to its professors, to fit them for this important and perilous warfare, ver. 14—17.

Stand³, therefore, having your loins girded about with truth⁴; having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having your feet ready shod⁵ with the gospel of peace.

14.

15.

Now, that you may not be at a loss to know what that armour of proof is which I so earnestly recommend, I will give you a brief description of it. In the first place, then, Let truth be your military belt: adhere firmly to the doctrine of the gospel; profess it sincerely, openly, and without disguise: this will inspire you with strength and vigour of mind. Put on next, the breastplate of integrity and universal virtue. Truth and righteousness must go together; and, united, they will form an impenetrable defence. And, that you may pass on in your Christian career with as little molestation as possible, you must always wear the greaves of peace. The gentle inoffensive spirit of the gospel will do much to smooth the ruggedness of the way, and to disarm the fury of the enemy and the persecutor. While, therefore, you firmly profess the truth, let your conduct at all times be mild and peaceable.

³ *Stand.*] Dr. Chandler observes, "The Christian must never flee from his post, or quit the field." "Some (says Dr. Doddridge) have observed, that no armour is provided for the back, as we must always face the enemy, or, have no defence from danger." It may also be remarked that the Christian virtues, here described as *the armour of God*, are very suitable for opposing the corruptions of Christian doctrine, and their use in this view is very obvious; but the propriety of the comparison, to say the least, is not equally apparent if the enemies to be resisted are evil angels.

⁴ *Truth.*] It is not perhaps easy to ascertain the distinct meaning of every expression. By *truth*, the military belt, we may reasonably understand, the genuine doctrine of the gospel; which must be firmly adhered to and publicly professed. The breastplate is *righteousness*, the practice of universal virtue, and the greaves are *peace*, "that benevolent peaceful spirit required by the gospel; which (says Chandler) will render persons ever ready for and cheerful in every kind and friendly office, and will be one of the best securities any one can have against the injuries of persecution."

⁵ *Feet ready shod.*] See Wakefield. "shod with the readiness or activity of the gospel of peace." Chandler.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 16.

Besides all¹ these, take up the shield of faith, by which ye will be able to quench all the fiery darts² of the wicked adversary³.

In addition to truth, righteousness, and peace, you must grasp the shield of faith: faith in the protection, and promise of God, by Jesus Christ, will keep you from being alarmed and wounded by those bold denunciations of vengeance and damnation, which the enemies of truth, and of the liberty of the gospel church, vociferate against the faithful disciples of Jesus, as if the thunder of heaven were at their own disposal. These burning shafts, so formidable to weak and unstable minds, are easily repelled by the broad impenetrable shield of rational confidence in the goodness of God, and in the promises of the Christian covenant.

17. *Take also the helmet of salvation⁴, and that spiritual sword, which is the word of God⁵.*

Let the hope of eternal life, founded upon the promises of the gospel, be the ornament and the defence of your head. Let this divine hope be the predominant affection in your breast, the constant spring of action in your soul, and by its benign influence let it overrule every inferior emotion, every low and unworthy impulse; and thus let it keep the understanding clear and cool, and capable of discerning and judging right, and diffuse an habitual cheerfulness over the countenance.—The last weapon which I shall mention, as necessary to complete the suit of Christian armour, is a weapon of attack as well as defence, which, if managed with skill and courage, will soon put hosts of adversaries to flight. I mean the word of God, the authentic declarations of the divine will by Christ and his apostles; which, if they are well under-

¹ *Besides all.*] ἐπὶ πᾶσιν, in addition to all. See Harwood.

² *Fiery darts.*] “It was customary among the ancients,” says Dr. Chandler, “to make small firebrands in the form of arrows, composed of pitch, tar, and brimstone, which they shot either into towns to set them on fire, or amongst their enemies, to disorder and annoy them. These the soldiers used to receive on their shields, and so prevented them from doing harm.” In the allegory, the fiery darts may be explained of the damnatory anathemas of the corrupters of Christian truth, which confidence in the divine mercy will easily repel.

³ *The wicked adversary.*] So Dr. Harwood. The slanderer, mentioned ver. 11. The principalities and powers, &c.; that is, the enemies of truth, ver. 12.

⁴ *Helmet of salvation.*] 1 Thess. v. 8, for a helmet, the hope of salvation. “The hope of salvation,” says Chandler, “built on the promises of God, will preserve from the fatal effects of all temptations, from worldly terrors and evils, so that they shall not disorder the imagination, or pervert the judgement, or cause men to desert the path of duty.”

⁵ *That spiritual sword, &c.*] So Mr. Wakefield. “The knowledge of this (says Dr. Chandler) not only separates them from evil affections, but teaches them to discern between truth and falsehood; guards the Christian from the entrance of corrupt and destructive doctrine, and destroys the influence and force of the most artful and delusive errors.” Beza observes that all the parts of the complete armour of the ancients are elegantly introduced into the apostle’s account of the armour of the Christian. See Macknight.

stood and properly applied, will, like a sharp and well-tempered sword, cut down that formidable band of reasonings and motives which the champions of error set in array against the advocates of truth. This is a weapon furnished by God himself, who by his spirit inspired the holy prophets; and its stroke is irresistible. If God, who is eternal and unchangeable, has declared that all sincere believers in Christ shall be accepted by him and adopted into his family, the envy, malice, and rage of those who would arrogate to themselves exclusively the tokens of the divine favour, may justly be regarded with pity and contempt.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 17.

In this armour stand, persevere, and advance. This will be your safety and your wisdom: as no armour is provided but that which enables you to face the enemy, nor any security for those who retreat.

4. The apostle recommends earnest prayer and intercession for one another; and particularly for himself, then a prisoner at Rome, ver. 18—20.

Continually offering all prayer and supplication⁶ in the spirit⁷, and watching thereto⁸ with all perseverance, and supplication for all the saints.

18.

Clothed and girded as you are in the panoply of the gospel, I would not have you so far depend upon your own courage and prowess as to forget your dependence upon God. From him you derive all your weapons of attack and defence, and all your skill to wield them; and upon his blessing you depend for success. To him therefore, while you stand upon the watch to observe the motions of the enemy, continually address your humble, fervent supplications, for yourselves and others, in obedience to the precepts, and agreeably to the spirit of the gospel; that you and they may be preserved from pernicious errors, and may be enabled to defend the truth of the gospel with success.

Particularly⁹ for me, that utterance¹⁰ may be given me, so that I may

19.

⁶ *Prayer and supplication.*] προσευχης και δεησεως. "These two words," says Dr. Chandler, "seem naturally to denote the asking of what is good, and the deprecating of what is evil, from their two roots; the first of which signifies 'wishing,' and the latter 'fearing.' Dr. Macknight renders them "supplication and deprecation." This distinction, however, is not adhered to, the word δεησις being used in the latter clause of this very verse for prayer in general.

⁷ *In the spirit:] i. e.* "either with their heart and mind, sincerely and fervently; or, according as the spirit of God should excite and move them." Chandler.—"praying in your mind at all times, i. e. as ye keep watch." John xi. 33. Wakefield.

⁸ *Watching thereto.]* "The apostle continues the use of military terms; and alludes here to the sentinels and guards of an army, who were to watch in their posts during the night, to prevent surprise and give notice of danger." Chandler.

⁹ *Particularly.]* Dr. Doddridge observes from Blackwall (*Sacred Classics*, vol. i. p. 145),

Ch. VI. *open my mouth to make known with confidence*¹ *this mystery of the gospel*²,
 Ver. 20. *for which I discharge my embassy in a chain*³, *that I may speak boldly in its behalf, as I ought to speak.*

Amongst others, I particularly request your intercessions for myself, who am engaged in the same honourable conflict with you, and have suffered severely in the struggle. Whether I labour or suffer, it is an encouragement to me to know that my brethren sympathize with me, and are offering up their prayers for me. Intreat, then, that God will be pleased to grant me both ability and opportunity to publish the gospel; and particularly, to speak boldly that great mystery so offensive to prejudiced and narrow-minded zealots, that believing Gentiles are admitted under the gospel dispensation to equal privileges with believing Jews. A glorious doctrine! of which I esteem it my highest honour to be an authorized ambassador; though, in consequence of my fidelity to my trust, I am now chained to a guard, and have long been a prisoner and an exile. Nevertheless, there is nothing I so much desire, whether a prisoner, or at large, as to be employed in this honourable ministry, and to proclaim the joyful tidings of the gospel with a

that the particle *καὶ* sometimes signifies *particularly*, or, *especially*; and that he produces passages to this purpose from proper authorities. See also Macknight.

"Earnest intercession for others," says Dr. Priestley, "is particularly recommended in the scriptures; and there is the same reason for it as for praying for ourselves, because the interests of others ought to be as dear to us as our own. As to the efficacy of prayer in general with God, to whom it is addressed, we must remain at a loss: it is enough for us that it is prescribed by God, who would not do it without sufficient reason. It is certainly well adapted to our present infant state, and has the happiest effect upon our minds. But whatever connexion there be between our prayers and the blessings we pray for, or something equivalent, though seemingly the reverse of our prayers, we may be assured that at this day there is nothing supernatural in it. We pray for our daily bread, and we thank God for it, but it is never given us except through the medium of our own labour; and the same, no doubt, is the case with blessings of a spiritual nature. This is certain, that a sense of our dependence upon God for all blessings, temporal and spiritual, cannot be too deeply impressed upon the mind: and this can only be done by meditation and prayer."

¹⁰ *Utterance, &c.*] Dr. Doddridge supposes that this may refer to some impediment in his speech, or other imperfection in the manner of his address. See 2 Cor. xii. 7, Gal. iv. 14.

¹ *To make known with confidence.*] This punctuation is approved by Stephanus, Estius, Bengelius, and Griesbach. The common reading is, "that I may open my mouth boldly." See Bowyer and Wakefield.

² *Mystery, &c.*] *i. e.* "the call of the Gentiles." See ch. ii. 3—10. Newcome.

³ *In a chain.*] *ἐν ἀλυσσει.* An allusion, no doubt, to his being in the custody of a soldier, and chained to him. "Few (says Dr. Doddridge) need be told that it was usual among the Romans to chain the prisoner's right arm to the left arm of the soldier that guarded him. But as the persons of ambassadors were always sacred, the apostle seems to refer to the outrage that was done to his divine master in this violation of his liberty." "It is a fine idea," says Dr. Priestley, "under which the apostle here exhibits himself. He was a prisoner and in bonds; but, notwithstanding this, he considered himself as an ambassador, and from a power superior to any on earth."

zeal and freedom which becomes one whose obligations to the mercy of God in Christ are so various and transcendent. Ch. VI.

CONCLUSION.

THE EPISTLE concludes with referring them to Tychicus for further information concerning himself; and with a general salutation and appropriate benediction, ver. 21—24.

*Now that ye also may know my affairs, and what I am doing, Tychicus⁴, Ver. 21.
a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will inform you of every
thing. Him I have sent unto you for this express purpose, that ye may
know what relates to me⁵, and that he may comfort your hearts.* 22.

I have not time to write particularly the state of my affairs; and it is the less necessary, as Tychicus my Christian brother, and faithful fellow-labourer in the gospel, who has passed some time with me at Rome, and who knows in what manner I employ myself, under what disadvantages and with what success I teach the gospel, will give you all the information concerning me that you can wish. He is the bearer of this epistle: and though much pleased with his company, and relieved by his help, I have sent him for the express purpose of letting you know the state in which I am; and of comforting and encouraging you, by representing the cheerfulness with which I bear persecution in the cause of Christian truth, and the great degree in which my sufferings have contributed to promote the success of the gospel.

*Peace be unto the brethren, and love, with faith, from God our Father, 23.
and from our Lord Jesus Christ⁶.*

⁴ *Tychicus.*] “He was one of Paul’s friends and fellow-labourers, and had been his companion in the last interview he had with the elders of Ephesus, when he sent for them to come to him at Miletus. Acts xx. 4, 17.” Doddridge.

⁵ *What relates to me.*] “The apostle means, that he wishes them to know what success he had had in preaching at Rome, what opposition he had met with, what comfort he enjoyed under his sufferings, what converts he had made to Christ, and in what manner the evidences of the gospel affected the minds of the inhabitants of Rome.” Macknight.

⁶ *From God, &c.*] *i. e.* from God the Father, who is the original source and author of the blessings of the gospel; and from the Lord Jesus Christ, who was appointed by him to publish and dispense them to mankind. *q. d.* May they have that peace which is the result of love to God and man, and founded in a cordial belief in the gospel which was given by God and published by Christ. “Here,” says Dr. Priestley, “as upon all other occasions, God or the Father is spoken of as one being, and Jesus Christ, or our Lord, as another. The difference is that of God and man, which certainly ought not to be confounded.”

Ch. VI.
Ver. 23.

May the best blessings for this life and the next be imparted to all who profess the Christian name; and in order to this, may God our Father, through the mission and doctrine of Jesus Christ our teacher and Lord, implant in your hearts that genuine faith which will be productive of love to God and benevolence to man; and which, without the rigour of the ceremonial law, is of itself a sufficient qualification for the character and privileges of the sons of God.

24. *Favour be with all those who love the uncorrupted doctrine¹ of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

May the favour of God, and the complete participation of all the blessings of the gospel, be granted to those who show their regard to Christ by receiving his doctrine in its primitive purity, and in firmly resisting every attempt to blend the simplicity of the gospel with the unauthorized inventions of human folly and presumption. Amen.

¹ *Who love the uncorrupted doctrine.*] *εν αθαρσια*. "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption." Mr. Locke remarks the peculiarity of the phrase, and explains it, "without mixing or joining any thing with him in the work of salvation which may render the gospel useless and ineffectual." See Gal. v. 2. Archbishop Newcome explains the text in the same sense: "not adulterating the gospel with false doctrines, as the judaizers did." As the expression "loving the Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption" sounds harsh, I have ventured to translate it by the equivalent phrase, "loving the uncorrupted doctrine of Christ."—"who love the Lord Jesus Christ in purity." Wakefield. Dr. Harwood gives a peculiar turn to the passage: "who love our Lord Jesus Christ, who is in immortality." The phrase is never used in the sense given to it in the public version, "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," that is, *truly and faithfully*.

THE EPISTLÈ

OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE PHILIPPIANS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

PHILIPPI¹ was a considerable city in the eastern district of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. The gospel was first preached in this city about A.D. 51, when the apostle Paul, having separated from Barnabas, had chosen Silas to be the companion of his labours, and in his circuit through the Lesser Asia having arrived at Troas, he had been admonished in a vision.

¹ Philippi took its name from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, who improved and fortified it, partly for the sake of the gold mines in the neighbourhood, and partly for defence against the Thracians. Acts xvi. 12, it is called "a colony;" and, ver. 21, the inhabitants call themselves Romans. It appears, by the coins of several of the Roman emperors, that it was first colonized by Julius Cæsar, and that other inhabitants were afterwards sent thither by Augustus. It is well known that Roman colonists retained the laws and privileges of Roman citizens. Acts xvi. 12, Philippi is called the *chief* city of that part of Macedonia, and the margin reads, the *first* city. Neither of these assertions is true; Amphipolis being the metropolis, and Neapolis the first city to which a traveller from Asia would come. See ver. 11. It is conjectured that the true reading is, "which is a city of the first part of Macedonia." This would require a very small alteration of the original (πρωτης instead of πρωτη της). Paulus Æmilius, when he conquered Macedonia, divided the country into four districts, of which the first was between the rivers Strymon and Nessus: in which district stood Philippi. See Peirce's *Synopsis* of the Epistle, and Benson's *Propagation of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 87.

to extend his mission to Macedonia, Acts xvi. 9, 10. He landed at Neapolis, and proceeded to Philippi; where, after having converted Lydia, a woman of property, he and his companions consented to pass some days at her house. In this interval he miraculously healed a young woman whose mind was deranged, and who, imagining herself possessed with a spirit of divination, had taken a fancy to bear her testimony to the divine authority of the Christian missionaries. The keepers of this unhappy creature, who by her restoration to her right mind were deprived of the iniquitous gains which they extorted from the credulity of the superstitious crowd, exasperated against the apostle and his companion, accused them before the magistrates as turbulent men, who were guilty of illegal practices, and who disturbed the peace of the city: upon which charge they were severely beaten, and cast into prison, without being heard in their own defence. But having been released by miracle, the jailer was converted and baptized. The next day, the apostles having obliged the magistrates to attend in person to set them at liberty, and to make an apology for having infringed their privileges as Roman citizens, they quitted Philippi and went to Thessalonica, Acts xvi. 12—40. In this mission, Luke and Timothy were associated with Paul and Silas.

The apostle passed through Philippi some years afterwards, in his way to Jerusalem from Macedonia, Acts xx. 6; and it is generally believed that he visited this city again, agreeably to his expressed intention, Philip. ii. 24, soon after his release from his first imprisonment.

It appears from the apostle's grateful acknowledgements, that the Christian converts at Philippi had been very kind to him. They had not only entertained him and his associates with great hospitality during his residence amongst them, but they had also sent him very liberal supplies, both into Achaia¹ and Thessalonica; and would have done more for him in other places if they could have found a safe and convenient conveyance. And it is observable, that the church at Philippi was the only society of Christians from whom the apostle, when he first preached the gospel in Greece, ac-

¹ *Achaia.*] This Dr. Paley apprehends the apostle to refer to Phil. iv. 15, 16; which he translates thus: "Now ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I was departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only; and that also in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity." From 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9, it appears that he accepted no pecuniary assistance from the converts of that country, but that he drew his supplies from the Macedonian Christians. This was at the beginning of the gospel, *i. e.* when he first preached the gospel in these parts. The ingenious and learned author justly infers from this undesigned coincidence in the two epistles, the impossibility of forgery. See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, p. 263—267.

cepted contributions of this kind; choosing, from prudential considerations, to wave his right of being maintained by those to whom he preached, and to support himself by his own manual labour, rather than give occasion to his enemies to calumniate his motives, or obstruct the progress of the gospel by making it burdensome to the hearers. See Phil. iii. 10, 14—16, 2 Cor. xii. 13, 14. It is generally inferred from 1 Cor. vii. 8, that the apostle was a widower, but many have concluded, from an expression in this epistle (ch. iv. 3), that Paul was a married man: but that his consort being unable to accompany him in his fatiguing and perilous missions, he had, as a testimony of his high regard and affection to his generous friends at Philippi, left her under their protection in that city, where she was employed, in company with other pious women, in acts of piety and charity. The Philippians had lately sent the apostle a very liberal present by Epaphroditus (ch. iv. 18), by whom it should seem that they had also expressed their tender sympathy with him in his confinement, and their alarms lest the progress of the gospel should be retarded by the arrest and persecution of its most zealous and successful advocate. This worthy messenger of the church, who had been visited with a long and dangerous sickness at Rome, probably in consequence of the fatigue which he had suffered, was now recovering; and being impatient to return to his anxious friends, who had heard of his illness, the apostle dispatched him with this letter (ch. ii. 25—30), the design of which is to acknowledge and to return them thanks for their pious liberality, to remove their apprehensions with regard to the consequences of his imprisonment, to fortify them against the intrusion and the mischievous doctrines of the judaizing zealots, and to encourage them to persevere in their adherence to the gospel. It has been observed, that this epistle contains very high commendations of the conduct of the Philippians, with little or no mixture of reproof²; a clear evidence that the Christian doctrine had not at that time been corrupted among them; and indeed it is probable that not many Jews were settled in the place, as there does not appear to have been any synagogue at Philippi. See Acts xvi. 13.³

² “*Est hæc Epistola, quanquam et ipsa Romæ in vinculis scripta, lætior, alacriorque, et blandior cæteris, ideo quod Philippis, quæ urbs præcipua est Macedoniæ et colonia, bis fuisset Paulus, et bene successisset ibi Pauli prædicatio, etc. Post quæ tempora Philippenses plerique fideliter custodierant ea quæ a Paulo acceperant, amoremque in tam bonum magistrum, et reverentiam multis modis erant testati.*” Grotius.

³ If the Jews had been numerous at Philippi they would have had a synagogue, where the apostle would, as usual, have opened his commission; whereas it appears that he began to

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS was written about A. D. 62¹, and near the close of the apostle's first imprisonment. It is one of those epistles the genuineness of which has never been impeached. Its authenticity is not only established by the concurrent testimony of the ecclesiastical writers, but by very strong internal evidence², particularly by many undesigned coincidences with the history of Luke, and by a cast of sentiment and a structure of style which are peculiar to St. Paul, and easily distinguished by those who are much conversant with that apostle's invaluable writings.

Having introduced the epistle with an appropriate salutation, ch. i. 1, 2, the apostle proceeds,

I. To express his gratitude to his Philippian friends for their liberality, and his prayers for their improvement, ver. 3—11.

II. To quiet their apprehensions, he gives some account of his own situation and views, of his feelings and his prospects of release, and of the great success of the gospel at Rome, ver. 12—26.

III. He exhorts the Philippian converts to cultivate a temper and spirit worthy of the gospel, and particularly to unanimity and fortitude in the profession of truth, after the example of Jesus Christ, and in hope of future reward. Ch. i. 27—ii. 16.

IV. The apostle promises to send Timothy to Philippi as soon as he could judge how his own case was likely to terminate, he expresses his hope of following him speedily; and in the mean time he dispatches their friend

preach at an oratory by the river side, out of the city, to the pious women who resorted thither. The Jewish converts were most easily seduced by judaizing teachers, and usually gave the apostle most trouble; the converts at Philippi were probably chiefly among the Gentiles.

¹ Dr. Lardner thinks, some time before the close of that year. *Supplement*, vol. ii. ch. xii. sect. 11.

² As internal evidences of the genuineness of this epistle, Dr. Paley mentions: 1.) The account of Epaphroditus, his journey, errand, sickness, &c. which are all incidentally hinted at as circumstances well known to his correspondent. 2.) The insinuation that Epaphroditus's recovery was natural, and not miraculous. 3.) The coincidence of the hints which he drops of having received supplies from the Philippians while he was in Achaia, with the facts he mentions in the second epistle to the Corinthians. Phil. iv. 15, 16, compared with 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9. 4.) The allusion to Timothy having been at Philippi, ch. i. 1, ii. 19, which, though not expressly mentioned, is plainly implied in Luke's history, Acts xvi. 3, xvii. 14. 5.) The epistle purports to have been written near the close of an imprisonment of long duration, which agrees with Luke's account, Acts xxviii. 31. 6.) The temper of the apostle's mind, as discovered in this epistle, ch. i. 23, and in the 2 Cor. v. 8, &c. is a presumption that they were written by the same person. 7.) The allusions to his persecutions at Philippi, ch. i. 29, 30, ii. 1, 2, agree with the account given by Luke, Acts xvi. 22.

and messenger Epaphroditus to them without delay, passing, at the same time, a high encomium upon his character, and warmly recommending him to their esteem, ver. 17—30.

V. The apostle earnestly warns them against the artifices of Jewish zealots, and urges them to follow his own example, and to adhere firmly to the doctrine which he had taught them. Ch. iii. 1—iv. 1.

VI. He sends specific messages to a few distinguished individuals; he adds some general exhortations; he renews his expressions of gratitude for their repeated kindness and liberality, and particularly for their late generous and acceptable present by Epaphroditus; and concludes the epistle with a suitable doxology, a general salutation, and the usual benediction, ver. 2—23.

and in consequence of the opposition to them without delay, passing at the same time a high recommendation upon his character, and warmly recommending him to their notice, ver. 17-20.

7. The apostle earnestly warns them against the attacks of Jewish teachers, and urges them to follow the good example, and to adhere closely to the doctrine which he had taught them, ver. 21-30.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS. The epistle which he had taught them, ver. 21-30. The epistle is addressed to the church of the Philippians; he reminds the members of gentleness for their repeated kindness and hospitality, and particularly for their late generous and acceptable present by Epaphroditus; and concludes the epistle with a suitable introduction, ver. 1-2.

CHAPTER I.

THE apostle, associating the name of Timothy with his own, introduces the epistle with a general salutation to the officers and members of the Philippian church, ch. i. 1, 2.

PAUL and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the holy believers in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons, for ever, 1.

1. There are but four epistles in which Paul does not introduce himself under the character of an apostle. The two epistles to the Thessalonians were written before his death, and that to Philimon was a private letter, requesting a favour of a friend. The object of this epistle to the Philippians appears to be in a great measure to express his gratitude to them for their liberality; he seems, therefore, purposely to avoid mentioning a title which carried in it a claim to a maintenance. See 1 Thess. ii. 6, 2 Cor. xii. 13. Even does it appear that there was any party formed against the apostle in the church at Philippi? Timothy's name is joined with his own, because he had been with the apostle when he first preached the gospel at Philippi. See 1 Tim. in ver. 3, and 2 Tim. on Philimon, ver. 1. Holy believers, &c. In the original, "all the holy in Christ Jesus," a periphrasis for all Christians; a word which the apostle never uses in any of his epistles, though it must have been familiar to him, as it was first imposed at Antioch, where he and Barnabas had preached the gospel with much success. Acts xi. 26: a plain proof that those learned men are mistaken who infer from the expression used by Luther, that this appellation was given by divine appointment.

2. Bishops, &c. The existence of these officers in the primitive church is indisputable; and the mention of them in this epistle, and in no other, seems to me to be no serious objection against the genuineness of the epistle. They might have been particularly active in the collection which had been made for the apostle, or there might be some other reason for mentioning them at which we are ignorant. See Doddridge and Macknight; and 7th letter, who also justly argues that the apostle, by the word bishops, separates, here, among the elders or presbyters of the church, says Dr. Tostatus, "the apostle could only mean the elders or presbyters of the church, to all of whom, as to those of the church of Ephesus, he gives the title of bishops, or overseers." There could be no such thing in that age as a bishop of one church having a superintendence over the ministers of other churches. Whether deacons were to be a useful institution or not, there is nothing to countenance it in the scriptures; and the history of the

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

C H A P. I. 1, 2.

THE apostle, associating the name of Timothy with his own, introduces the epistle with a general salutation to the officers and members of the Philippian church, ch. i. 1, 2. Ch. I.

*PAUL and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ*¹, *to all the holy believers in Christ Jesus*² *who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons*³, *fa-* Ver. 1.
2.

¹ *Servants, &c.*] There are but four epistles in which Paul does not introduce himself under the character of an apostle. The two epistles to the Thessalonians were written before his authority had been disputed; and that to Philemon was a private letter, requesting a favour of a friend. The object of this epistle to the Philippians appears to be in a great measure to express his gratitude to them for their liberality: he seems, therefore, purposely to avoid mentioning a title which carried in it a claim to a maintenance. See 1 Thess. ii. 6, 2 Cor. xii. 12, 13. Nor does it appear that there was any party formed against the apostle in the church at Philippi. Timothy's name is joined with his own, because he had been with the apostle when he first preached the gospel at Philippi. See Peirce *in loc.* and Benson on Philemon, ver. 1.

² *Holy believers, &c.*] In the original, "all the *holy* in Christ Jesus:" a periphrasis for all *Christians*; a word which the apostle never uses in any of his epistles, though it must have been familiar to him, as it was first imposed at Antioch, where he and Barnabas had preached the gospel with much success, Acts xi. 26: a plain proof that those learned men are mistaken who infer, from the expression used by Luke, that this appellation was given by divine appointment.

³ *Bishops, &c.*] The existence of these officers in the primitive church is indisputable; and the mention of them in this epistle, and in no other, seems to me to be no serious objection against the genuineness of the epistle. They might have been particularly active in the collection which had been made for the apostle, or there might be some other reason for mentioning them of which we are ignorant. See Doddridge and Macknight; and Whitby, who also justly argues that the apostle, by the word *bishops*, ἐπισκοποι, here, means the elders of the church. "By bishops," says Dr. Priestley, "the apostle could only mean the elders or presbyters of the church, to all of whom, as to those of the church of Ephesus, he gives the title of bishops, or, overseers. There could be no such thing in that age as a bishop of one church having a superintendence over the ministers of other churches. Whether diocesan episcopacy be a useful Institution or not, there is nothing to countenance it in the scriptures; and the history of the

Ch. I.
Ver. 2.

your be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul and his beloved associate Timothy, whose highest boast it is to be the servants of Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, and the messenger of his grace to the heathen world, send their affectionate salutations to their generous friends, to all true believers in Christ in the celebrated city of Philippi; and particularly to those grave and venerable men who so worthily preside over their religious assemblies; and likewise to those active and faithful persons to whose management the temporal concerns of the society are committed. The blessing of God be upon you all, and a large participation of that peace which results from the faith and hope and temper of the gospel of Christ.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE expresses his gratitude for their kindness, and his prayers for their improvement in the spirit of the gospel. Ch. i. 3—11.

1. The apostle expresses his great satisfaction in their liberal spirit, his gratitude to God for it, and his firm persuasion that they will persevere in their Christian principles and conduct, ver. 3—7.

- 3, 4. *I thank my God for all your remembrance of me¹; always and in every*
5. *prayer of mine for you all, making supplication with joy, because of your*
6. *contribution to the gospel² from the first day until now. Being confident*

church in later ages shows how liable it is to the grossest abuses, making the church of Christ to resemble the kingdoms of this world, by feeding the pride and ignorance of some churches and bishops, to the degradation and oppression of others."

It is very true, as Dr. Priestley observes, that diocesan episcopacy is not a divine institution. Neither is any other form of church discipline and government. The Christian religion, with great wisdom, leaves every society of believers to model its own discipline according to its own ideas of expedience. And though episcopacy has been often perverted to evil purposes, to which all human institutions are liable, and of which episcopacy is far from exhibiting the sole example, it does not follow that this mode of church government which has so generally prevailed may not in all cases be lawful, and in some highly expedient.

¹ *All your remembrance of me.]* ἐπιπατητῇ μνηρίᾳ ὑμῶν. Compare Luke xv. 7, 10. See Peirce; who proposes and vindicates this translation.

² *Contribution, &c.]* κοινωνία εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. i. e. "communicating or contributing to my support while I have been employed in preaching the gospel." Peirce; who observes, that if he had intended what our translators have expressed, he would have said τὰ εὐαγγέλια. 1 Cor. i. 9. Eph. iii. 9. See Wakefield. *From the first day:* "i. e. ever since I began to preach among you." Peirce.

of this, that each of you who hath begun a good work³ will go on to finish it until the day of Jesus Christ. As it is just for me to think this of you all, because you retain me in your hearts⁴, and because you were all joint contributors to the present which I received⁵, both during my bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. Ch. I. Ver. 7.

It is with the greatest satisfaction that I not only hear of, but that I also experience in my own person, the happy effects of your Christian benevolence. I thank God that you still remember your faithful friend and teacher in the gospel, and that neither length of time nor distance of place, nor depression of circumstances, have effaced your affectionate sympathy. I often pray for you; which is the only way in which I can express my love and gratitude to you. And as often as I pray, I recollect with joy, and express with gratitude, your great liberality in the generous contributions which you have made to support the great expense of the mission of the gospel among the heathen. This generous spirit manifested itself, not only when your affections were warmly excited at your first conversion to the faith, but, to your great honour, this zeal has never relaxed, from that time to the present hour: and I have no doubt that you will persevere, as long as you live, in the same generous, public-spirited conduct; and that you will be found so employed when you are summoned to the great and final tribunal. I speak with confidence of you all without exception; and I have the best reason for the good hopes which I entertain respecting you, for I am informed that every individual

³ *That each of you, &c.*] So Mr. Wakefield translates the clause; and much more suitably to the connexion than the common version. *Until the day, &c.* "i. e. as long as you live." Peirce.

⁴ *You retain me in your hearts.*] δια το εχειν με εν τη καρδια υμας. The original is ambiguous: I adopt the version of Peirce and Wakefield, as more agreeable to the context.

⁵ *Joint-contributors, &c.*] "You have all been contributors to the gift I have received, in order to my being the better prepared for my defence." Peirce; who shows that the word κοινωνος is sometimes taken in an active sense in classical authors. See 1 Cor. ix. 23; which he translates thus: "This I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be συγκοινωνος, in conjunction with others, a communicator of the gospel." Pearce (Peirce) I believe," says Dr. Paley *Hor. Paul.* p. 256, "was the first commentator who gave this sense to the expression, and I believe also that his exposition is now generally assented to." It is very evident that Dr. Paley appeals to Peirce of Exeter, whose criticism he cites, and not to Bishop Pearce. But it is remarkable that Bishop Pearce himself, in his *Epistolæ Duæ*, Works, vol. ii. p. 478, incidentally gives the same sense to the passage. He considers the text in ver. 3, 4, as corrupted and confused, and conjectures the true reading to be, Ευχαριστω τω Θεω με (επι παση τη δεήσει μου παντοτε υπερ παντων υμων, μετα χαρας την μνησιν ποιημενος) επι τη κοινωνια, κ. τ. λ.: "et Apostolum puto velle dicere, se gratias Deo agere quia Philippenses huic suas divitias communicârunt, ut Judæis inopia laborantibus ministraretur." This, though a very ingenious conjecture, being destitute of all authority, is therefore inadmissible, as Mr. Peirce observes, who gives what he esteems a correct interpretation of the received text.

How little support is given by this passage to the Calvinistic doctrine of final Perseverance, or that a man who has been once converted cannot fall away from grace, is sufficiently obvious.

Ch. I.
Ver. 7.

among you sympathizes kindly with me in my present confinement, and that you all contributed in proportion to your ability to that handsome and seasonable present which you have sent me; and for which I may have particular occasion, as I expect in a short time to be called upon to defend myself, and the gospel which I am commissioned to preach, at the imperial tribunal.

2. The apostle further assures them of his tender affection for them, which he expresses in earnest prayer to God for their improvement in the knowledge and spirit of the gospel, ver. 8—11.

8. *For God is my witness how earnestly I long after you all with the tender*
 9. *affection¹ of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound*
 10. *still more and more in knowledge and in all discernment², that ye may distinguish things that differ³, that ye may continue clear⁴ and unperturbed⁵*
 11. *till the day of Christ: being filled with the fruit⁶ of righteousness⁷ through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.*

Be assured, my dear friends, that your great kindness to me, and your generous remembrance of me, is not lost upon me. God, who searches the heart, is witness to the truth and fervour of my affection for you; how earnestly I desire to visit you, how much I wish to impart to you some Christian instruction, some spiritual consolation. But, for the present, a personal in-

¹ *Tender affection.*] Gr. bowels. See Wakefield and Newcome.

² *Discernment.*] αἰσθησῆαι "see Prov. i. 7, The fear of the Lord is the beginning αἰσθησεως." Newcome. "I pray that your attachment to the gospel may increase and show itself by your knowledge of its principles and your feeling of its influence. The word, in the original, implies perception and feeling." Dr. Priestley.

³ *Distinguish things that differ.*] So Peirce. Wakefield and Newcome prefer the common version, viz. "things that are excellent." Peirce refers to 1 Thess. v. 21 as a parallel text, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good;" and adds, "Nor can a man's holding fast any controverted opinion in religion be of any advantage unless he hold it fast upon such a trial; nor is there any other way for men to approve themselves sincere against the day of Christ while they neglect this course, as is here plainly intimated."

⁴ *Clear.*] εὐλκρινής, qui ad solem explicatus et spectatus purus reperitur." Schleusner. It is generally understood of sincerity, in opposition to deceit and duplicity: see Peirce. Grotius explains it, "ut clarè omnia perspiciatis;" and Mr. Wakefield translates it, "that ye may continue with discernment." See 2 Pet. iii. 1. Perhaps this sense better suits the connexion: q. d. that you may be clear-sighted in the doctrine of Christ.

⁵ *Unperturbed.*] ἀποσκόποι. The word is doubtful: it sometimes signifies, not giving offence to others, 1 Cor. x. 32. Mr. Peirce thinks it here signifies, "Do nothing to offend yourselves:" i. e. to wound your own consciences, Acts xxiv. 16. Mr. Wakefield translates it, "without stumbling;" and in this sense it best connects with εὐλκρινεῖς, if that word is rendered clear-sighted.

⁶ *Fruit.*] This word is read in the singular number in the best copies. See Griesbach.

⁷ *Righteousness.*] i. e. liberality. See Ps. cxii. 3, 9; 2 Cor. ix. 9, 10; James ii. 13. Peirce.

terview is not permitted. And the only return I can make for your kindness and liberality is, by praying for you. And this, my brethren, is the object of my earnest aspirations on your account: That you may persevere and improve in that amiable, benevolent, and generous spirit, by which you have hitherto been distinguished; and that your Christian benevolence may be combined with proportionable improvement in Christian knowledge, and in a capacity to form a right judgement concerning the doctrines of the gospel. And this I desire for you, to the end that you may be able to distinguish truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and may not be in danger of being misled by false and seducing teachers, who, I fear, are endeavouring to insinuate themselves among you. Hitherto you have maintained the gospel doctrine in its purity, and have preserved inviolable your Christian liberty. I pray that you may persevere to the end of life in the same honourable course; that your principles may be uncorrupted; that your conduct may excite no prejudices against your profession: that so you may enjoy, to their utmost extent, the comfort, the reputation, and the affectionate gratitude, which are the genuine fruit and just reward of your Christian liberality, which redounds so much to the honour of God, and to the credit of the gospel, and for which you will hereafter receive ample recompense at the great day, when we shall all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ.

Ch. I.
Ver. 11.

SECTION II.

THE APOSTLE reports to the Philippians an encouraging account of his present situation; and expresses his hope that it would soon be in his power to make them a visit. Ch. i. 12—26.

1. He informs them that his long confinement had, upon the whole, contributed to the success of the gospel, ver. 12—14.

Now I would have you know, brethren, that what hath happened to me hath turned out rather⁸ to the advancement of the gospel. So that my bonds are well known to be for the sake of Christ⁹, through all the palace¹⁰, and all

12.

13.

⁸ *Rather.*] *μᾶλλον.* Mr. Wakefield's version is, "has been *greatly* to the furtherance of the gospel."

⁹ *For the sake of Christ.*] The expression in the original is ambiguous; the sense given in

Ch. I.
Ver. 14.

other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord¹, emboldened by my bonds, have ventured², with much more undaunted courage, to speak the word of God³.

You are naturally apprehensive, lest my long imprisonment at Rome may have been a considerable impediment to the progress of the gospel. But divine providence often compasses its ends by means which are to us unsearchable; and in the present case I can assure you for your comfort, that an event which appeared in itself so likely to obstruct and to put an end to my usefulness, has, in fact, contributed greatly to extend it. My tedious and unjust confinement has promoted the diffusion of the gospel. For it has excited the curiosity of many, even in Cæsar's palace, as well as in all other districts of the city, to inquire into the cause of this bitter persecution; and having discovered that the only ground of accusation was, that I preached the gospel to the Gentiles, it has led them to inquire into the contents of this glorious dispensation; the consequence of which has been, that many have become sincere and confirmed believers, and some of them of no inconsiderable rank in the imperial court. And though the chain I wear is a considerable restraint upon my personal exertions, yet I am happy to say that I have many faithful colleagues who are both able and willing to labour in this honourable cause, and who, observing the cheerfulness with which I endure this long confinement, and its happy effect, so contrary to their expectation, in diffusing the knowledge of the gospel, have become more active, zealous, and courageous in the propagation of Christian truth, and brave every danger in so glorious and divine a cause.

2. The apostle expresses the great satisfaction he felt in the zeal with which the gospel was promulgated, even though some of the preachers of it were influenced by motives personally unkind to himself, ver. 15—18.

the translation seems best adapted to the context, and is given by Peirce, Harwood, Macknight, Wakefield, and Newcome. If it were known that he was imprisoned solely for preaching the Christian doctrine, and not for any offence against the state, it might tend to make an impression in his favour, and contribute to his enlargement.

¹⁰ *Palace.*] “the word properly signifies, the judgement-hall. Some think the camp of the pretorian guards is meant. See *Le Clerc, Suppl. to Hammond.*” Newcome.

¹ *Brethren in the Lord.*] “Christian brethren, described in the second clause of the next verse.” Newcome.

² *Have ventured.*] See Doddridge's version. Gr. “are more abundantly bold to speak the word without fear.”

³ *Of God.*] τὸ Θεοῦ. This, which is wanting in the received text, is the reading of the Alexandrine and several other manuscripts, and of the Syriac, Italic, and Vulgate versions. See Griesbach and Peirce.

Some, indeed, are preaching Christ even through envy and contention⁴, and some also through good-will. Those who preach him from love⁵ preach, knowing that I lie in prison for the defence⁶ of the gospel. But those who preach from strife, proclaim Christ with no pure intention⁷, meaning to add affliction to my bonds. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and herein I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice⁸.

Ch. I.
Ver. 15.
17.
16.
18.

Many are engaged in preaching the great truth, that Jesus is the Christ; but, I am sorry to add, not all with equally pure and benevolent motives. Strange to relate, there are some who preach the good news of universal peace and good will to men, from a contentious, perverse, and envious spirit; but there are also some who preach the same doctrine from the best and most generous motives. These illustrious characters, who honour me with

⁴ *Some are preaching Christ through envy and contention.*] These were, no doubt, judaizing zealots, who, professing to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, but insisting upon the observation of the Jewish ceremonial as essential to salvation, were implacable enemies to the apostle, who was a zealous advocate for the liberty of the Gentile Christians. These would probably take advantage of the apostle's confinement; and would go about among the new converts, endeavouring to persuade them to submit to the Mosaic ritual, than which nothing, as they well knew, would be more mortifying to him. It should seem that, though these men preached their judaizing doctrine in a degree which marked the malignity of their temper, and their hostility to the apostle, yet they did not preach it to that extent in Rome to which they carried it in some other places. Otherwise the apostle would hardly have called it preaching Christ. See Gal. i. 6—9, v. 2, 3. Perhaps these zealots were afraid of insisting loudly and publicly at Rome upon the absolute necessity of submission to the Jewish ritual, lest they should give offence to the civil power. See Peirce and Macknight. Mr. Evanson, surely, has little reason to argue, from the bad spirit of Paul's opponents, that the epistle is not genuine.

⁵ *Those who, &c.*] The construction of the original (οἱ μὲν—οἱ δὲ) requires the transposition of the 16th and 17th verses, which is supported by many good manuscripts and versions. See Griesbach, Wakefield, and Newcome. Peirce justly remarks, “that οἱ ἐξ ἀγάπης, and οἱ ἐξ ἐριθείας, are the subjects and not the predicate of their respective sentences;” which is also the construction of Wakefield and Newcome.

⁶ *Lie in prison for the defence.*] εἰς ἀπολογίαν τῆς εὐαγγελίᾳ κειμαι. “that I lie in bonds in order to make an apology.” Peirce; who thinks this sense better suited to the connexion than the common version, *I am set or appointed for the defence, &c.*: he observes, that the proper sense of ἀπολογία is a defence upon an accusation. Perhaps the meaning is, *q. d.* I must remain in confinement till after my defence; and therefore, as I can do less, these exert themselves the more.

⁷ *With no pure intention.*] ἄγνως. This expression may refer either to the insincerity of their motives, or to their corruption of the Christian doctrine: perhaps the apostle included both. I have adopted Mr. Wakefield's translation.

⁸ *Will rejoice.*] “The friends of Paul,” says Dr. Priestley, “were encouraged by his firmness to preach the gospel with the greatest boldness; and others who were probably judaizing teachers, of whom, as appears by St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, there were many in that metropolis, preached it in such a manner as tended to disparage the apostle, thinking perhaps to mortify him by preaching independently of him, and undervaluing him; and also, preaching many doctrines that he did not approve, especially the universal obligation to adhere to the laws of Moses. Paul, however, rejoiced in this preaching of the gospel, for hereby converts would be made to it, and the evil that might be occasioned by the preaching of his enemies would in time be rectified.”

Ch. I.
Ver. 18.

their friendship, are the more active in the labours of their ministry, because they know not only that I am a prisoner for the sake of the gospel, but that till I have made my defence, or rather, which is in effect the same, till I have pleaded the cause and made known the doctrine of Christ before the imperial tribunal, I must continue in confinement, unable to exert myself as I wish. It is their desire, therefore, to supply my deficiency, and in this they manifest their affection to me by their zealous co-operation in the same cause. The other party, who oppose my doctrine and envy my success, teach indeed that Jesus is the Christ, and so far it is well. But they neither act from a good motive, nor teach uncorrupted doctrine. As far as they dare, at this distance from Jerusalem, the chief seat of their polity and worship, they insist upon the observation of judaical rites; and thus they expect and intend to add to my sufferings, by the pain which they know that it would give me to witness their success in propagating unsound doctrine. But in this they are mistaken: for after all, and amidst all the imperfection, and all the insincerity with which they exercise their ministry, they agree with those who are animated by a better spirit in teaching, the fundamental truths of the Christian religion, and in this I do and I will rejoice: knowing that they who sincerely embrace the first elements of Christianity, and who practically acknowledge Jesus as their master, will not, whatever their teachers may intend, be materially injured by speculative errors.

3. The apostle expresses his cheerful confidence that this zeal for the gospel would contribute to his release; and that his defence at his approaching trial would be conducive to the success of the Christian doctrine, ver. 19, 20.

19. *For I know¹ that this² will end in my deliverance³ through your prayer,*
20. *and through the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ⁴, according to my earnest expectation and hope that I shall disgrace myself in no respect⁵; but*

¹ *I know.*] *οἶδα*. Though the apostle uses strong language, he does not mean to express absolute certainty of release, but merely a confident expectation of it; for in the next sentence he expresses at least a possibility that the issue might be fatal.

² *This.*] *i. e.* "this preaching of Christ of which my bonds are the occasion, ver. 18." Peirce. "this imprisonment." Wakefield.

³ *Deliverance.*] *σωτηριαν*, *release from confinement*. 2 Cor. i. 6, Acts vii. 25, xxvii. 34, are passages in which the word is used in a sense different from *eternal happiness*. See Peirce, Wakefield, Harwood, Macknight, and Newcome. Peirce suggests that "the preaching of the Judaizers, out of envy, would give his friends an opportunity to represent to the emperor and those in power, that he was persecuted by the Jews out of malice, and not for any real crimes against the state. He might be sensible what good use would be made of this to favour his release."

⁴ *Supply of the spirit.*] "which was promised in imminent danger, and for which the apostle had occasion in his defence before Nero." Harwood.

that *with all freedom of speech now, as at all other times, Christ will be honoured in my person*⁶, *whether it be by life, or by death.* Ch. I. Ver. 20.

I rejoice in the zeal with which the fundamental doctrines of the gospel are promulgated; nor need you, my friends, be anxious lest I should suffer any inconvenience on this account; for I am persuaded, that so far from being an impediment to my release, as some desire and expect, it will rather tend to accelerate that happy event, in connexion with your prayers for me, and with that supply of holy courage and freedom of speech which Christ has promised to his faithful servants, when they are called to plead his cause before kings and rulers. The enmity of Jewish zealots will be no disadvantage to me in the imperial court; and the prevalence of the gospel in its genuine spirit must be favourable to my cause. And I am fully confident that my honoured Master, who has so powerfully supported me upon all former occasions, will not, by denying me his promised aid, suffer me to disgrace myself and the cause in which I am embarked, at the approaching important crisis; but that, by a becoming freedom of speech when I am called to defend my character and cause at the tribunal of Cæsar, the doctrine of Christ will obtain a glorious triumph through my instrumentality, whatever the event may be as to my own person, and whether I, the herald of salvation, be condemned or released.

4. The apostle, though on his own account desirous of release from a state of labour and suffering, expresses, nevertheless, an entire readiness to continue at his post as long as he could be of use to others by preaching the gospel, ver. 21—24.

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die, gain*⁷. *But though this living in the flesh, would be to me a fruitful labour*⁸; *yet, what I should choose I* 21, 22.

⁶ *Disgrace myself.*] So Mr. Wakefield; or, *be disappointed.* He refers to Rom. v. 5; where the word is used in the sense of *disappoint.* “I shall be put to shame in nothing.” Newcome.

⁶ *Person.*] Gr. “body.”

⁷ *To live is Christ, and to die, gain.*] The Arabic translator reads *χρησον*, *good*; which Griesbach marks as a valuable reading. Beza, Calvin, Gataker, and Peirce make *Χριστος* the subject of both members of the sentence, and *κερδος* the predicate of both; *q. d.* for Christ to me, both in life and death, is gain. But Wolfius *Cur. Crit.* observes, that the apostle would then have written *εμοι γαρ Χριστος, και το ζην, και το αποθανειν κερδος.* See Bowyer.

⁸ *Would be to me a fruitful labour.*] Gr. “fruit of labour,” *i. e.* fruitful, or advantageous labour. To him to live was to preach Christ; and this employment would be highly advantageous; the greater the labour, the greater would be his reward. Yet even this consideration can hardly reconcile him to life. The expression in the original is elliptical: *ει δε το ζην εν σαρκι, τειτο μοι καρπος εργα.* Dr. Newcome supplies *διδεται μοι* after *σαρκι*, and his version is: “But

Ch. I. cannot say¹. But I am distressed between the two², having a desire to
Ver. 23. depart³, and to be with Christ, which were very far better⁴. Nevertheless,
24. to continue in the flesh is more necessary for you.

if it be given to me to live in the flesh, this preaching of Christ is the fruit of my labour." "But if this life in the flesh be to me a fruitful employment in his gospel." Wakefield. "Quod si vero vita mea in corpore, utilitatem afferret muneri meo, sane quid eligam nescio. Καί, sane." Rosenmuller.

¹ I cannot say.] ε γνωρίζω. So Wakefield; who thus preserves the proper signification of the word, which is lost in the common translation, and which has created a difficulty to critics. See Peirce.

² Distressed between the two.] See Wakefield. "I am borne different ways." Doddridge; who observes, "that the original is very emphatical, συνεχομαι εκ των δυο, and seems to be an allusion to a ship riding at anchor, and at the same time likely to be forced to sea by the violence of the winds."

³ To depart.] εις το αναλυσαι. "to be unbound." Doddridge. Many manuscripts omit εις, and it is ingeniously conjectured by Bishop Pearce, that the true reading is τε αναλυσαι. See Peirce and Bowyer, and Bishop Pearce's *Epp. Duæ*.

⁴ Very far better.] πολλω μαλλον κρεισσον. The original is very emphatical. "multo magis melius." Vulgate. The Clermont and some other manuscripts read ποσω for πολλω, and omit γαρ. q. d. O how very far better! It is commonly inferred from this text, and with some appearance of plausibility, that the apostle expected to be introduced into a state of activity and happiness immediately after death; but this conclusion is inconsistent with his doctrine in the epistles to the Corinthians and the Thessalonians, where he represents the happiness of a future life as entirely dependent upon a resurrection from the dead; without which he assures them that their faith is vain, and that all who had fallen asleep in Christ had perished, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14, 1 Cor. xv. 12—18. To make the apostle, therefore, consistent with himself, we must understand him as comparing the present state with that which will take place immediately after the resurrection, and accounting as nothing the intervening lapse of time. Not, indeed, upon the metaphysical, however just, supposition, that the interval of thousands of ages is in reality nothing; but, because the apostle, and all the Christians in that age, believed that the second appearance of Christ to raise the dead, and judge the world, would take place in the course of a very few years, so that some who were then living would be witnesses to that awful event. It is upon this ground that he regarded as nothing the few years which he supposed would elapse before the resurrection of the dead. See 1 Thess. iv. 15.

"Nothing can be inferred from this text," says Dr. Priestley, "in favour of an intermediate state between death and the resurrection. For the apostle, considering his own situation, would naturally connect the end of this life with the commencement of another and a better, as he would have no perception of any interval between them. That the apostle had no view to any state short of the coming of Christ to judgement, is evident from the phrase he makes use of, viz. being with Christ, which can only take place at his second coming. For Christ himself has said that he would come again, and that he would take his disciples to himself; which clearly implies that they were not to be with him before that time.

"Accordingly, for many centuries after the notion of an intermediate state was advanced, a notion which has been the foundation of the doctrine of purgatory, and many other absurd and mischievous opinions and practices in the church of Rome, and of no good whatever, it was never imagined that the departed souls were to be with Christ, but only in a place under ground called Hades, where they were to wait till the resurrection of their bodies, at which time, and not before, it was supposed that they would be with Christ. The opinion, of the soul going immediately to heaven, was not advanced with any degree of confidence by any Christians except the Gnostics, who believed in no resurrection at all, till about a thousand years after Christ."

"The scripture," says the venerable Bishop Law, "in speaking of the connexion between our present and our future being, doth not take into the account our intermediate state in death, no more than we, in describing the course of any man's actions, take in the time he sleeps. Therefore the scripture must affirm an immediate connexion between death and judgement, Heb. ix. 27, and represents the coming of Christ as near at hand, James v. 8, 9." Law's *Inquiry*, App. No. xiii. xiv.

I am well prepared for the awful alternative of life or death. While I live, indeed, I am doing something to promote the cause of Christ, and to diffuse his doctrine in the world; and this it is which gives life all its value, and reconciles me to remaining in life. But, independently of usefulness, life would be of little value; and death would be far preferable to the fatigues and sufferings which I continually undergo. Indeed, so weary do I often feel, that the desire of rest almost prevails over that of usefulness; and I can hardly say whether I incline most to live or die. My situation is like that of a ship at anchor, exposed to the impulse of opposite currents. Self-interest and the love of ease sometimes prompt the wish to break loose, to depart from a region of storms and dangers, and to return to port, where I should soon be summoned into the presence of my glorious chief, and receive the promised reward—a reward how great and transcendent! a state how unspeakably preferable to the present mixed and variable scene! Nevertheless it is for your advantage, and for that of the church in general, that I should remain a little longer at my post; and I am content to do so. My master's will is mine: I desire nothing so much as to approve my fidelity to him.

Ch. I.
Ver. 24.

5. With these views the apostle expresses his firm conviction that he shall be spared, and in due time restored to the society of his friends, ver. 25, 26.

And, being confident of this, I know⁵ that I shall remain, yea I shall remain with you all⁶, for the advancement of your faith and joy⁷; that your glorying⁸ in Christ Jesus may abound through me, by my presence with you again.

25.
26.

Being fully persuaded that the continuance of my mission will, for the present, be of considerable advantage to the Gentile churches, I have no

⁵ *I know,*] by inference, not by revelation; for in that case he could not have supposed it possible that his confinement might issue in martyrdom, ver. 20.

⁶ *With you all.*] “I shall not only remain on earth, but continue my intercourse with you. See ver. 26.” Newcome.

⁷ *Advancement, &c.*] Doddridge. “for your furtherance and joy in the faith.” Newcome. Mr. Wakefield translates the words, “for your satisfaction, and the furtherance of your faith;” and observes in his note, that “the transposition of the two substantives is authorized by the Syriac, and in some measure by other versions, to say nothing of the context.” Griesbach takes no notice of any various reading. I have given Dr. Doddridge's translation, which evidently expresses the apostle's meaning. So Grotius explains the text: “*Quò majori cum gaudio conjuncta sit fides vestra.*” “*Ut a juvenem vestrum profectum in cognitione et virtute, et gaudium, quod ex fide promanare solet.*” Rosenmuller.

⁸ *Glorying in Christ.*] They would not only rejoice to see the apostle at liberty, and to enjoy his instructions, but would also triumph over his adversaries, who represented his imprisonment as a proof of the invalidity of his mission. See Peirce and Newcome.

Ch. I.
Ver. 26.

doubt that my life will be prolonged. And not only so, but I am further persuaded that I shall also obtain my release from this long confinement, and shall be permitted once more to visit you, and all the other Gentile churches which I have planted, to confirm your faith and promote your joy, by recounting to you the beneficial effects which have resulted from this painful and tedious imprisonment. And my presence with you will completely justify the triumph which you have so often expressed in your conversion to the Christian doctrine by me, who was your first instructor; and will confute and bring to shame the malignant insinuations of those who would infer from my sufferings, and particularly from my long restraint from public service, that I am not an authorized apostle of Jesus Christ.

SECTION III.

THE APOSTLE exhorts the Philippians to cultivate a spirit worthy of the gospel, and particularly recommends mutual affection, humility, and fortitude in the profession of truth, from the example of Christ, and in expectation of future reward. Ch. i. 27—ii. 16.

1. The apostle urges them to a firm adherence to truth and duty, undimmed by opposition, ver. 27—30.

27. *Only¹, behave worthy of the gospel of Christ², that whether I come and see you, or being absent hear of your concerns, I may be assured³ that ye stand firm in one spirit⁴, striving together with one soul for*
28. *the faith of the gospel⁵, and in no degree intimidated by your oppo-*

¹ Only.] *Hoc tantum moneo in præsentia.* Menochius apud Pol. Syn. See Newcome. Gal. ii. 10, v. 13.

² Behave, &c.] *πολιτευεσθε.* "The word literally signifies, 'to behave as denizens of some city or corporation.'" Doddridge.

³ I may be assured.] The expression is elliptical by the omission of *ιδω και ακρω* after *υμων*, and the ellipsis is supplied variously, but the apostle's meaning is evident. See Wakefield.

⁴ Stand firm in one spirit.] unanimous in your adherence to truth. See Peirce. "*Standi verbum athletic convenit gradum servantibus; a quibus sumpta est translatio.*" Beza.

⁵ Striving, &c.] "united in exertion to maintain the uncorrupted faith in opposition to Jewish zealots. See ch. iii." Peirce; who observes, "that their own unanimity, and their withstanding and opposing seducers to Judaism, were the two points on which the apostle was about chiefly to insist." *Striving, συναθλωντες, wrestling together, jointly contending:* the metaphor is still kept up. "It signifies," says Dr. Macknight, "the greatest exertions of courage and strength. The word denotes the action of the Athletæ in the Olympic games."

nents⁶, (which constancy⁷ is to them a certain evidence of your ruin⁸, Ch. 1.
but to you of salvation⁹: For this favour has been graciously given¹⁰ to Ver. 29.
you by God with respect to Christ, not only to believe in him, but even to suf-
fer for him;) enduring the same conflict¹¹ which ye saw in me, and now hear 30.
to be in me.

To promote your stability and improvement in the Christian doctrine, I am willing to continue in a state of labour and of suffering. I have one, and but one, favour to ask of you in return for this testimony of my affection: Live as Christians. Let your whole conduct correspond with the laws and the spirit of that holy community into which you are now initiated, and in the privileges and immunities of which you have been made to participate. I hope soon to be at liberty to visit you: at all events, I cannot be long without hearing of you. But in whatever way I gain information of your state, let me have the satisfaction to learn that you all adhere stedfastly to the doctrine of the gospel, in its simplicity and purity; that you are unanimous in the profession of it, and that you support one another in earnestly contending for the truth, and in a zealous opposition to all false doctrine, under whatever pretence it may be pressed upon you. They who wish to subvert your principles announce their doctrines as essential to salvation, and

⁶ *Intimidated.*] *πτυρομενοι*, startled by your opposers: i. e. judaizing teachers, "who alone, says Mr. Locke (Eph. i. 25), were likely to affright the convert Gentiles, and to make them start out of the way of the gospel; which is the proper import of the word." Peirce.

⁷ *Which constancy.*] "*ἡτις*, says Dr. Newcome, is here used for *ὅπερ*, as Eph. iii. 13 it is used for *αἵτινες* being in both places attracted by the following substantive. See also Col. i. 27."

⁸ *Of your ruin.*] "When these Judaizers saw that they could not by all their endeavours prevail upon the Gentiles to comply with what they took to be the condition of salvation, Acts xv. 1, they would esteem them obstinate and incorrigible, and as abandoned by God to everlasting perdition." "It is no new thing (adds Mr. Peirce) for men to make such things the conditions of salvation, as God does not; and then unmercifully to damn those who do not submit to them." Peirce. See also Macknight. The common interpretation supposes, that the constancy of the Philippians was an evidence of destruction to their opponents: which is hardly consistent or intelligible. The construction requires, that from the middle of the 28th verse to the end of the 29th should be included in a parenthesis.

⁹ *Salvation.*] I follow Mr. Wakefield in finishing this sentence at *σωτηρίας*. He pleads the authority of the Syriac, Æthiopic, and Arabic translators. Griesbach is silent.

¹⁰ *Graciously given.*] The apostle here, with great address, speaks of suffering for Christ as an honour and a favour: thus obviating the objections of those who represented persecution as a token of divine displeasure, and of disapprobation of the persecuted cause. Newcome, Peirce.

¹¹ *Enduring the same conflict, &c.*] The construction requires that this should be joined with the former part of the 28th verse. Bowyer. It is uncertain what that conflict is to which the apostle alludes, whether the opposition of judaizing teachers, or of persecution. The former, from the connexion, seems most probable; though we hear nothing of any such contest which the apostle had at Philippi. Perhaps both may be included.

Ch. I.
Ver. 30.

anathematize all who will not receive them. Fear them not: their anathemas are vain. This firmness of yours they will call obstinacy, and represent it as a sure mark of reprobation. But believe me when I assure you, that you cannot possess a stronger evidence of the safety of your state than a firm practical adherence to the purity of the Christian faith. You have also this further proof of your interest in the promises of the gospel. God has not only called you to the profession of the gospel, but he has vouchsafed you the great honour of being confessors and sufferers in this holy cause. Do not, then, disgrace it or yourselves, by suffering this inestimable treasure to be injured and corrupted. Your situation is similar to my own: you saw that I strenuously resisted every attempt to blend the simplicity of the gospel with the bondage of the law; you know that I am now in confinement for maintaining the liberty of the Gentile church, and you are now struggling with the zealots who wish to bring you under the yoke of the ceremonial institution. Follow my example: resist them firmly: and upon no consideration abandon the principles, or resign the privileges, of the gospel.

2. The apostle earnestly adjures them to manifest their affection to him by uniting zeal for truth with a peaceable, humble, and disinterested spirit, ch. ii. 1—4.

Ch. II.
Ver. 1.

*If, therefore*¹, *there be any consolation in Christ*², *if any comfort from love, if any communion of spirit*³, *if any tender compassion*⁴, *complete ye my joy*⁵: *that ye may be unanimous, maintaining the same love, having your souls joined together in attending to one thing*⁶, *doing nothing through*

¹ *If, therefore.*] *q. d.* If you have that affection for me which you profess, and which I am confident that you feel, complete my happiness; which you will accomplish most effectually by love and kindness to each other, and by a cordial union to support the pure doctrine of the gospel, in opposition to those who would subvert the truth or corrupt its purity.

² *If any consolation in Christ.*] *q. d.* if there be any comfort in the doctrine of Christ, in which we mutually participate.

³ *Communion of spirit, &c.*] *κοινωνια πνευματος.* This may be understood of the gifts of the holy spirit communicated by the apostle; or, more probably, of spiritual union or fellowship. See Peirce and Wakefield.

⁴ *Any tender compassion.*] Gr. “any bowels and mercies.” “affection and compassion.” Wakefield. *q. d.* if you have any sympathy in my privations and sufferings, which indeed you have so largely contributed to relieve.

⁵ *Complete, &c.*] The apostle had before expressed his great joy at the good account which he had received from Epaphroditus of their faith and liberality, chap. i. 4: he now wishes that they may render his satisfaction complete, by mutual harmony among themselves, and by a steadfast adherence to the purity of the faith.

⁶ *Attending to one thing.*] “The apostle forcibly inculcates unanimity and agreement by a redundancy of language.” In this observation of Archbishop Newcome most expositors con-

*contention or vainglory, but in humility of mind giving others a preference to yourselves: each one considering not his own attainments only, but every man the attainments of others also*⁷. Ch. II. Ver. 4.

In this conflict of principles and parties, allow me to put in my claim to a share in your regard. If there be any thing valuable in your Christian profession, you owe it in some measure to me, who first enlightened you in the doctrine of Christ. If, then, you set any value upon that doctrine which reveals an immortal existence, if there be any delight in that cordial affection which the true disciples of Jesus bear to each other, if there be one common spirit of holiness and zeal pervading the community of those who believe, and in which we, I trust, largely participate; finally, if you still feel, as I am sure you do, a kind affection for your first instructor in the faith, and a tender sympathy with him in his sufferings for truth, let me conjure you by all these tender and engaging considerations to contribute what lies in your power to my comfort and satisfaction. You have indeed already done much; you have received the gospel readily; you have professed it honourably and consistently; you have shown me much personal kindness. Persevere, my brethren: complete my satisfaction, fulfill my joy. Unite with me in firm adherence to Christian principles, in resolute opposition to false doctrine, and to insidious and seducing teachers. Be unanimous amongst yourselves in the prosecution of this honourable cause. If you maintain your integrity, you will indeed afford me the highest delight, an ample remuneration for all my labours and my sufferings. Unite in opposing the common enemy; but first of all, love one another: be peaceable; be humble; let each be ready to give preference to others, and to wave his own right to precedence. Think not highly of your own attainments; regard not solely your own interest. Allow to others the merit of those good qualities which they possess; and be zealous and active in promoting the

cur. Mr. Wakefield's version is, "having the same dispositions, the same love, the same soul, the same mind." Dr. Daniel Scott joins the two former and the two latter clauses; viz. "that ye may be unanimous, maintaining the same love; having your souls joined together, in attending to the one thing." See Doddridge's note upon the text. Mr. Peirce expounds the words thus: "Let me have a complete joy and satisfaction, in your manifesting the same disposition towards me which I have declared that I have towards you all." And he observes, in his note, that it "will make all easy if we understand the apostle in the first clause as exhorting them to be like-minded with himself; and the *το ἐν φρονεῖντες* as signifying their agreement with one another." The difficulty is, to avoid tautology.

⁷ *Not his own attainments only.*] "his own advantages and excellencies, thus filling himself with pride." Newcome — "The apostle does not mean to encourage a busy pragmatical temper; which he elsewhere utterly condemns. 1 Thess. iv. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12; 1 Tim. v. 13." Peirce.

Ch. II. welfare of others; for in so doing you will best consult your own ultimate
Ver. 4. advantage.

3. The apostle, to enforce the practice of self-denial, urges the example of Christ, in his voluntary humiliation and subsequent exaltation, ver. 5—11.

1.) The apostle states the circumstances of Christ's voluntary humiliation as an example of self-denial to his followers, ver. 5—8.

5, 6. *Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God¹, did not peremptorily lay claim² to this resemblance of*
7. *God³, but divested himself⁴, assuming the form of a servant⁵, and becoming*

¹ *In the form of God.] εν μορφη Θεου. "Μορφη, forma, omne quod in oculos occurrit, imago, similitudo." Schleusner. Hesych. ιδεα, ειδος. This word occurs but three times in the New Testament: Mark xvi. 12, he appeared in another form to two of them; and Philip. ii. 7, he took upon him the form of a servant. Its proper signification is, an external visible appearance. In this sense Christ could not resemble God, who is invisible; the word is used, therefore, in a figurative sense: and to pretend that here is an allusion to some pre-existent glory, or to his supposed appearance upon Mount Sinai, is perfectly gratuitous, and destitute of all proof and probability. I have given in the paraphrase what appears to me the true sense of the expression. God alone, the omnipotent Author of Nature, can controul its laws and operations at pleasure; and the voluntary power of working miracles which Christ was permitted to exercise, exhibited a striking resemblance of the divine omnipotence, and distinguished this illustrious prophet from all former prophets and messengers of God.*

² *Did not peremptorily lay claim, &c.] ουχ αρπαγμαν ηγησατο. did not regard it as a prey: did not seize as his right: as a property acquired by his own prowess, for which he was amenable to no account. "Αρπαγμος, proprie, direptio, ipsa rapiendi actio. Nomen verbale; et nomina in os desinentia fere actionem, non rem, et statum, significant. Sed interdum tamen passivè usurpatur, ut significet rem raptam, prædam, vel rem avidè diripiendam et vindicandam. Hinc formula αρπαγμαν ηγεισθαι τι, cupidè aliquâ re uti, studiosissimè eam occupare, et sibi vindicare, significat." Schleusner.—"non rapinam arbitratus est." Vulg.—"did not esteem it a prey or booty." Newcome; and Peirce, who observes "that αρπαγμος, which is a word that occurs very seldom in classic authors, has probably the sense of αρπαγμα, as βαπτισμος of βαπτισμα, &c., and that it signifies something actually in possession, which a person is eagerly desirous to retain." Mr. Wakefield, from Eustathius, shows that, according to the genius of the Greek language, αρπαγμος is equivalent to αρπαγμα. Sylva Critica, iii. 112, § cxlii. Dr. Clarke observes, that the construction also requires, that the clause ουχ αρπαγμαν κ.τ.λ. should be understood as expressing, not his greatness, but his humiliation; otherwise the expression would have been, not αλλα, but ομως δε, or, αλλ' ομως, nevertheless. Clarke's Script. Doct., No. 934. The connexion also requires this sense; for the apostle is exhorting the Philippians, after the example of Christ, not to seek after that to which they had no claim, but, for the benefit of others, to part with that which they might have retained. It highly favours this interpretation that it is the sense in which the word was understood by all the Ante-Nicene writers. The churches of Vienne and Lyons, in their epistle to those of Asia, speaking of the martyrs who suffered in the time of the emperor Verus, say, They were such zealous followers of the example of Christ, who being in the form of God, ουχ αρπαγμαν κ.τ.λ. did not claim as a right, was not tenacious of being like God, that though they had often been cast to wild beasts, and had endured all manner of torments, yet would they not suffer themselves to be honoured with the title of martyrs, &c. See also Origen on John, p. 34, Huet. et Novatian De Trin. cap. 17. Grotius, Tillotson, Whitby, and Bishop Bull, disapprove the common translation. Mr. Wakefield renders the clause, "did not think of eagerly retaining this divine likeness."*

like other men⁶. And being in condition like another man⁷, in obedience to God he humbled himself⁸ unto death, even unto death upon a cross.

Ch. II.
Ver. 8.

Practise self-denial. Be ever ready to make the greatest sacrifices for the good of others; and be assured you will not ultimately be losers by your generosity. Drink deeply into the spirit of Christ, and follow his great example. He voluntarily and cheerfully made far greater sacrifices for the benefit of mankind than it is possible for any of his followers to pretend to, and his reward was proportionably great. He was exalted far above all other men by his miraculous gifts; he was anointed with the holy spirit and with

³ *Resemblance of God.*] *ισα Θεω*, "to be as God, or in the likeness of God," Whitby; who observes, that *ισα* is frequently used adverbially in the LXX. Job x. 10, *hast thou not curdled me, ισα τυρω*, like cheese? xi. 12, *man is born, ισα ονω*, like a wild ass's colt. See also xiii. 12, xv. 16; Isa. li. 23. If the apostle had intended to express complete equality, he would rather have used *ισον τω Θεω*. See John v. 18. But the thought of the humble Jesus arrogating to himself perfect equality with the Almighty God, whose servant and messenger he was, could never have entered into the apostle's mind. The true sense of the passage appears to be that which is expressed in the paraphrase, viz. that Christ, possessing voluntary powers of working miracles, did not regard them as his own property and right. He had been taught by the discipline of his temptation in the wilderness, that he was not to exercise the powers intrusted to him to promote his own interest, or to gratify his own ambition; nor, in general, to extricate himself from danger. And this was so remarkably the character of our Lord, that he even prohibited his disciples from speaking of some of the most illustrious of his miracles; he was supported by the contributions of his followers, in preference to a supernatural supply; and till his appointed hour was come, he chose rather to withdraw from the scene of danger than to rescue himself by miracle. And this, by the way, obviates the objection which some have made against the supposition that Jesus was intrusted with discretionary miraculous powers. It amounts to exactly the same thing, whether he never wrought a miracle but by immediate impulse, or whether, being intrusted with a voluntary power of working miracles, his mind was so perfectly disciplined that he never exercised that power but upon proper occasions.

⁴ *Divested himself.*] *ἐαυτον εκενωσε*. "emptied himself of it." Wakefield.—"made himself of no account." Newcome. Not that he actually resigned his miraculous powers, but that he never exerted them except upon special occasions; and that in the common intercourses of life he acted as though he possessed them not, so that no one from his appearance would expect any thing extraordinary from him.

⁵ *Assuming the form of a servant.*] *μορphen δελε λαβων*, he voluntarily submitted to the labours, the indignities, and to the punishment of a slave. *Μορφη δελε* does not imply that he was actually a slave, nor does *μορφη Θεο* prove that he was truly God. He resembled God in his miraculous powers, he resembled a slave in his labours and sufferings.

⁶ *Becoming like other men.*] *εν ομοιωματι ανθρωπων γενομενος*, being made in the likeness of men: i. e. of other men, who possessed no superior powers. He made himself like them by not exerting the powers he possessed upon ordinary occasions. See Judges xvi. 7, 11, 13, 17: *I shall become weak, and be ως εις των ανθρωπων*, like another man. The expression *likeness of men*, no more proves that Christ possessed a nature different from that of men, than the similar expression, as applied to Sampson, proves that warrior to have been one of a superior class of beings.

⁷ *Being in condition like another man.*] *σχηματι ευρεθεις ως ανθρωπος*, being found in fashion as a man. *ευρεθεις*, *cum esset, cum existeret*. Ellys's *Fortuita Sacra*, Newcome, Peirce. *σχημα*, state and condition. Raphelius. "*Omnem habitum et statum alicujus rei externum significat.*" Schleusner. 1 Cor. vii. 31.

⁸ *He humbled himself unto death.*] This plainly implies, that the submission of Christ to a violent death was a voluntary act, which it was in his power to have avoided if he would; agreeably to his own declaration John x. 15, 17, 18.

Ch. II.
Ver. 8.

power ; the spirit was communicated to him without limitation ; and he exercised at pleasure those miraculous powers which were given him for the confirmation of his mission : and in this sphere, like that Almighty Being himself whose delegate and ambassador he was, he spontaneously controuled the laws, and changed the course, of nature. Nevertheless, so admirably was his mind enlightened, and his heart disciplined to his situation and office, that he never presumed to arrogate these mighty powers, this similitude to the Almighty, as his own natural right, as the acquisition of his own wisdom and strength, for the possession of which he was indebted to none, in the exercise of which he was controulable by none, and for the use of which he was amenable to none. Far otherwise. He knew that he possessed these mighty powers as a trust for which he was accountable, and in the use of which he had been fully instructed : and therefore he strictly confined the exercise of them to the purposes for which they were communicated. He never exhibited them for the purpose of display ; he seldom used them for his own personal benefit ; he acted in the concerns of life as though he possessed them not. He declined the applause which the gratitude of the happy subjects of his beneficent miracles, and the admiration of surrounding multitudes would have accumulated upon his head. Resembling the Almighty in the powers which he possessed, in external appearance he assimilated himself to a servant. For the good of mankind he submitted to the labours, and bore the indignities, of a slave. Thus, notwithstanding the dignity of his character and the greatness of his powers, he could not in appearance be distinguished from other men. And being, as to his external state and condition, like a person of the meanest rank in life, destitute even of necessities, when it was in his power to have commanded all the pomp and luxury which opulence could supply, he carried his self-denial still further ; and in obedience to the will of God, who had given him a commission to redeem mankind from idolatry and vice, he submitted to greater indignities still. And though no human power could have wrested his life from him, though legions of angels would, in obedience to his summons, have instantaneously appeared in his defence, though he could in an instant have struck all his adversaries to the ground, and though he felt and trembled at the horrors of his approaching sufferings, yet because the purposes of his mission required it, and his heavenly Father directed it, he without hesitation submitted to a death which it was in his power to have avoided ; and that, a kind of death the most painful and ignominious, being nailed to and

suspended upon a cross. These were the sacrifices which Jesus made, and the sufferings which he voluntarily underwent for the good of mankind. Ch. II. Ver. 8.

2.) The apostle insists upon Christ's exaltation as the reward of his self-denial, ver. 9—11.

Therefore God, on his part, hath very highly exalted him¹, and hath granted him that name² which is superior to every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend³, of those who are in heaven, and upon earth, and under the earth⁴, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. 9. 10. 11.

This unexampled instance of voluntary humiliation and suffering for the benefit of mankind was not left destitute of its proper reward. The righteous and benevolent Governor of the world, who, to answer the wise pur-

¹ *God on his part, &c.*] *καὶ, vicissim.* Rom. i. 24. Newcome. "ὕπερψωσε. Ideo Deus eum multo sublimiorem fecit quam erat antea." Grotius, Peirce. Heb. xii. 2, Dan. iv. 34.

² *That name.*] See Griesbach and Newcome. *A name superior to every name*: i. e. authority superior to all former prophets and messengers of the divine will. "Nomen hic est dignitas." Grotius. See Eph. i. 21.

³ *In the name of Jesus, &c.*] i. e. that all should be taught by Jesus the worship of the true God. "It should be translated in, says Secker, *Sermons*, vol. iii. p. 344. *To bow the knee* is to pray. Eph. iii. 14. Or, rather thus: that a token of subjection should be shown at, for, on account of the glorious name, dignity, or authority of Jesus. Matt. vi. 7, xi. 6; Acts vii. 29. The next verse shows what this dignity is." Newcome. Viz. that every tongue should confess, &c.

⁴ *Of those that are in heaven, &c.*] i. e. says Newcome, and most of the expositors with him, "of angels, of men now living, and of departed men." I would rather understand this figurative expression of Jew and Gentile, the living and the dead. See Mr. Locke's note upon Eph. i. 10. At any rate, let it be remembered, that it is the worship of God, not of Jesus, which is here spoken of. In the name, not at the name, of Jesus, every knee shall bow: as his disciples, not as his worshipers, as many believe.

Mr. Peirce conjectures, or rather he considers the scriptures as teaching, that "antede-
dently to the advent of Christ, God allotted to the angels provinces and dominions; one being
appointed to preside over one country, and another over another. But that at our Lord's re-
surrection an end was put to this rule of angels; they themselves, together with all nations,
were put under Christ, whose authority and power were then highly advanced above what
they were before: he being intrusted with universal dominion, and all that were rulers and
governors before being made his subjects and ministers." To this, I had almost said *wild*,
but at best very improbable, hypothesis, the learned writer accommodates the tenth verse: and
upon this principle he explains the ninth, 'And upon this account God has advanced him
higher than before.'

"Whether the apostle annexed any distinct ideas to these phrases," says Dr. Priestley,
"or only meant to give one general idea of the great power to which God had raised Christ,
is not very certain. The phrase *heaven and earth* might have been a kind of proverbial ex-
pression, denoting the universe in general. But it has been conjectured that *the things in hea-
ven, the things in earth, and the things under the earth*, in this place may refer to the threefold
division of the heathen gods, some of whom were said to have power in heaven, others upon
earth, and others under the earth, or among the ghosts of the dead: intimating, that all these
heathen deities would fall before the doctrine of the gospel of Christ; or, that idolatry in all
its forms would fall before it. This interpretation appears to me not improbable."

Ch. II.
Ver. 11.

poses of his administration, imposed this severe duty upon his holy servant Jesus Christ, has in return made him ample compensation for this great act of filial obedience and magnanimous benevolence. He first raised him from the grave; and has since advanced him to the highest honour and authority. He has made him superior to all former prophets and messengers of his will, without excepting the Jewish legislator himself; whose authority was never meant to extend beyond the limits of the Hebrew nation, while the divine religion of Jesus Christ, confirmed by his miracles, his death, and resurrection, is intended for universal prevalence. The law which he has promulgated is to be obligatory upon all mankind; upon those who were favoured with former revelations, as well as upon those who were left to unassisted reason and the dim light of nature. The blessings of the gospel extend to the dead as well as to the living; and the doctrine of Jesus reveals the awful truth, that all who are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth. It is the will of God that this divine religion, of which Jesus is the honoured founder, should be promulgated to all nations; and in due time all the systems of heathen idolatry shall fall before the banner of the cross: all the tribes of mankind, of every rank and degree, shall bow to the sceptre of Christ: all shall learn from him how to offer the most acceptable homage to his and their Father; and while they joyfully acknowledge and honour him as their Master, they shall with grateful hearts adore the mercy of God in sending his well-beloved son and faithful servant into the world, as the teacher of truth and the messenger of peace. Such is the honour and reward which has been conferred upon Jesus, our great Lord and Master, for his willing obedience, and his meritorious self-denial for the good of mankind. Be you animated by the same spirit, and from the same righteous and merciful Judge you shall receive your due reward.

4. The apostle enforces his exhortation from the deference which they had hitherto uniformly paid to his authority; and from the help which they had obtained from God, ver. 12, 13.

12. *Wherefore*¹, *my beloved brethren, as ye have always obeyed me*² *with re-*

¹ *Wherefore:*] *i. e.* since Christ has done so much for us. Newcome, Peirce. See ver. 3—5.

² *Obeded me.*] So Peirce and Wakefield. This suits the connexion better than if the word *God* had been supplied, agreeably to the opinion of some expositors: for the apostle, being about to give a solemn charge, enforces it by reminding them of the attention which they had been used to pay to his advice and directions. Mr. Wakefield observes, that “this trans-

*spect and reverence*³, and that not only when I was present but much more now in my absence, promote earnestly the welfare of each other⁴, for God is working in you both to be willing⁵, and to perform. Ch. II. Ver. 13.

You see, my beloved Christian brethren, the example of our Master Jesus Christ. How great his condescension, his self-denial, his voluntary humiliation, and sufferings for the benefit of mankind, and how transcendent his reward! I beseech, I charge you to resemble him to the utmost of your ability, in your exertions to assist and benefit one another. And I flatter myself that this my solemn injunction will not be ineffectual. I bear you testimony that, while I was with you, and exercising my ministry at Philippi, you discovered the utmost anxiety and solicitude to comply with my wishes, and to conform to my instructions in every thing. And since I have left you, and especially since I have been a prisoner for the gospel, you have discovered, if possible, a still more earnest concern to adhere to the principles and rules which you received from me. Let me not be disappointed in the present case: especially as God, in his good providence, has imparted to you the discoveries and promises of the gospel, which is a law of love, and which, if practically believed, will be sure to generate a kind and benevolent

lation is as consistent with the original, and much more with the scope of the writer, than the former."

³ *With respect and reverence.*] *μετα φοβη και τρομα*, with fear and trembling; probably a colloquial phrase, by which is expressed respectful deference to the directions of a teacher or master. It occurs in three other places only in the New Testament, 2 Cor. vii. 15, "whilst he (Titus) remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him." See also 1 Cor. ii. 3, Eph. vi. 5. In this sense it is properly connected with the clause which precedes it, and expresses the deference which the Philippians paid to the instructions of the apostle. Mr. Peirce, who proposes and defends this interpretation, renders the words *humility and concern*.

⁴ *Promote earnestly the welfare of each other.*] *την εαυτων σωτηριαν κατεργαζεσθε*. The connexion seems to require this interpretation in preference to the common one, "work out your own salvation." See Peirce, Harwood, and Wakefield. *εαυτων* is sometimes used for *one another*. See Eph. iv. 32. *χαριζομενοι εαυτοις*, forgiving one another, Col. iii. 16, Heb. iii. 13. Mr. Peirce, however, allows that the word does not occur in this sense in any other passage in this epistle. *σωτηρια* is unquestionably sometimes used in the sense of temporal welfare, prosperity, or comfort. See Philip. i. 19, with Peirce's note. *κατεργαζομαι* signifies *to secure, to effect*. Dr. Harwood translates it, "sedulously effect and secure one another's welfare." See Harwood's note *in loc*.

⁵ *God is working, &c.*] *To will, i. e.* by the motives of the gospel he produces this effect in your minds, and by the opportunities his providence affords he enables you to fulfill your generous purposes. This expression does not necessarily imply an immediate divine impulse upon the mind, much less does it countenance the strange doctrine of irresistible grace. "It is God who infuseth into you the powers of acting and willing in this manner." Harwood. Bishop Pearce, in his *Epistolæ Duæ*, objects to the expression *ενεργειν εν υμιν*—*το ενεργειν*, and conjectures that *επιτελειν* is the true reading. Mr. Peirce, though he allows the ingenuity of the conjecture, objects to the admission of a merely conjectural emendation, unsupported by manuscripts; and ably defends the received text.

Ch. II.
Ver. 13.

temper, and has afforded you many opportunities of exercising and gratifying your generous feelings.

5. The apostle further enforces his exhortation from a regard to the credit and success of the gospel, and from the expectation of Christ's appearance, ver. 14—16.

- 14, 15. *Do all things with good-will¹, without grudging and hesitation², that ye may be blameless and uncorrupted³, the children of God without reproach⁴, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation⁵, amongst whom shine ye forth as lights⁶ in the world, holding out⁷ the doctrine of life, that I may*

¹ *With good-will.*] I place the period after ενεργειν, with an anonymous writer in Bowyer, and with Mr. Wakefield: της ευδοκίας αυτης, is the reading of the Ephrem manuscript alone. —The words υπερ της, κ. τ. λ. are commonly joined to ver. 13. Admitting this punctuation, Mr. Peirce observes, “that the sense is either, ‘that God works in you to be willing to act in this manner, that he may promote good will among you, which ought to be a strong motive to good-will, because God does so much to promote it;’ or, ‘that God works in you to be inclined to, and to act from this principle.’” Archbishop Newcome adopts the common version: “It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” “As a motive to constant vigilance and exertion,” says Dr. Priestley, “the apostle reminds the Philip-pians of the great goodness of God, who, by giving the gospel in reality, does every thing for us; the principles of the gospel being that which animates and engages us to act as we ought to do in life. It is unquestionably God that works in us, and for us, but not immediately. The contrary idea has been the source of much enthusiasm.”

² *Grudging and hesitation.*] “γογγυσμων και διαλογισμων γογγυσμος, indignatio clandestina quæ non palam profertur. 1 Pet. iv. 9. διαλογισμος, cogitatio et opinio hominis secum ratiocinantis. Luc. v. 22. dubitatio. Luc. xxiv. 38. disceptatio. Luc. ix. 46.” Schleusner. Deut. xv. 9. See Peirce; who observes, that the apostle here continues his subject from ver. 3.

³ *Blameless and uncorrupted.*] αμεμπτοι και ακεραιοι αμεμπτος, integer ab omni vitiositate. ακεραιος, ακεραιζειν lædere, nocere. Eum notat qui nemini lædit, ab omni dolo, ac fraude alienus, homo perfectus.” Schleusner. “Some derive the word from κραω misceo, and give it the sense of sincerum, immixtum: blameless and uncorrupt.” Wakefield.

⁴ *Without reproach.*] αμωμητα. “unreproveable.” Newcome. “spotless.” Wakefield. “Ex a priv. et μωμος macula, nulla macula notatus.” Schleusner.

⁵ *Crooked and perverse generation.*] “σκολιας και διεσραμμενης. See Deut. xxxii. 5. σκολιος tortuosus, obliquus, curvus. Luc. iii. 5. metapohrice pravus, iniquus, perversus. Act. ii. 40. διασρεφω, torqueo, in varios anfractus deflecto, corrumpto, perverto, vitiosum reddo.” Schleusner. These epithets are applied to the Jews in the Old and New Testaments; but there can be no reason to limit them to that nation only. They may be extended to idolatrous heathen, to persecuting Jews, or to judaizing zealots, who were desirous to corrupt the genuine doctrines of the gospel.

⁶ *Amongst whom shine ye forth as lights, &c.*] “εν οἷς, agreeing with ανθρωποις understood.” Bowyer, Newcome. “as luminaries.” Wakefield. Dr. Doddridge, from Saurin, supposes, that there is an allusion to a light-house, and paraphrases the words thus: “Shine as elevated lights in the dark world about you, that you may direct those who sail on this dangerous sea, and secure them from suffering shipwreck on those fatal rocks which every where lie in their way.” The imperative sense of the verb is preferable to the indicative.

⁷ *Holding out.*] The word επεχω has the sense both of holding fast, and holding out or exhibiting. See Schleusner. The latter seems better suited to the connexion. Christians, as luminaries to the world, are to exhibit, both by instruction and example, the excellence and energy of that doctrine which reveals a future everlasting life. “Beza thinks this is an allusion to those towers which were built at the entrance of harbours, and on which fires were kept burning to direct ships into port.” Macknight.

glory in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. Ch. II.
Ver. 16.

Let your benevolent actions be the genuine effect of a truly benevolent spirit. Perform them without a reluctance which would indicate that your kindness was extorted and involuntary, and without any of those frivolous excuses and pretences which betray a backwardness to good works. By this liberal and generous spirit you will show that your profession is not a mere name, and that your principles produce their proper effect, so that none will have reason to charge you with insincerity. You will approve yourselves the genuine sons of God, who has adopted you into his family who were once aliens and enemies, and admitted you to all the privileges and expectations of his children. You will retain your integrity and preserve your character and principles unsullied, amidst the scoffs of idolaters, the malice of unbelieving Jews, and the insidious arts and practices of false brethren, who are desirous of subverting your faith and infringing your Christian liberty. In the midst of temptation hold fast your integrity; and in a dark and benighted region let the lustre of your benevolent example exhibit to the admiring world the beauty and excellence of the doctrine of Christ, and thus engage them to embrace it cordially as the only foundation of our immortal hopes. If such be your conduct, you will fulfill my best wishes and gratify my highest ambition. We shall then have a glorious meeting at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, where I shall enjoy the unspeakable satisfaction to see that I have won the prize for which I have contended in the course, and my anxious and persevering labours will be crowned with the reward of which I was most ambitious, the salvation of those to whom I proclaimed the joyful tidings of the gospel.

6. The apostle expresses his willingness to suffer as well as to labour in the cause of truth, and for the benefit of his hearers, and calls upon his friends to congratulate with him, if this should be the event of his present conflict, ver. 17, 18.

Yea, if I should even be poured out as a libation^s upon the sacrifice and 17.

^s *Poured out as a libation.*] "If my blood be poured out as a drink-offering, Lev. ii. 6, Num. xv. 5, 7, upon the acceptable sacrifice and public oblation of your Christian faith to God, Rom. xv. 16. The heathen also poured libations of wine on the victim which was about to be sacrificed." Newcome." The word σπεινδομαι occurs twice only in the New Testament: here, and 2 Tim. iv. 6. It is rendered by Schleusner, *paulatim absumor*; perhaps it may have no direct allusion to a sacrificial rite. "The apostle," says Dr. Priestley, "compares the

Ch. II. *offering of your faith, I rejoice and congratulate with you all; and in the*
Ver. 18. *same manner do ye also rejoice and congratulate with me*¹.

Yea, my Christian friends, with this glorious prospect in view, I am as willing to suffer, as to labour, in the cause of truth, and for the benefit of mankind. And if my present confinement and my approaching trial should, as it possibly may, terminate in martyrdom; if my blood should be poured out as a libation upon the acceptable sacrifice of your faith, and the public offering of your homage and worship to the true God, so far from regretting it as a calamity, I shall glory in it as an honour; I shall triumph in it as the crown and completion of my most fervent desires; and, my dear brethren, I call upon you, as deeply interested in my success, and as faithful confessors in the same cause, to unite your joy and congratulations with mine for the honour conferred on one whom you profess so highly to esteem, so affectionately to love.

SECTION IV.

THE APOSTLE promises to send Timothy to the Philippians as soon as he could judge how his own case was likely to be determined at Rome; he expresses his hope of visiting them soon in person, and in the mean time, he dispatches Epaphroditus with this epistle, and passes a high encomium upon his character. Ch. ii. 19—30.

1. The apostle promises that as soon as he can learn how his own case will be determined he will send Timothy, of whom he gives a high and honourable character, ver. 19—23.

19. *But I hope in the Lord Jesus*² *to send Timothy to you soon, that I may be of good comfort also when I know the state of your affairs.*

faith of the Philippians and the fruits of it to the victim, and himself to this libation which accompanies it; intimating that he would cheerfully give up his life to promote their faith in the gospel."

¹ *Congratulate with me.*] Dr. Doddridge remarks, that he "cannot read this heroic discourse of the apostle without reflecting on the behaviour of the brave Athenian mentioned by Plutarch, (*Opp.* p. 347,) who returned to Athens from the victorious battle of Marathon, bleeding to death with the wounds he had received in the action, and coming directly to the house where the magistrates were assembled, uttered only these two words, *χαίρετε, χαίρομεν*, take your share of our joy, and immediately dropped down dead at their feet."

² *I hope in the Lord Jesus:*] that is, I hope that Jesus, my master, will permit me. The apostle upon every occasion expresses himself as immediately under the direction of Jesus,

Ch. II.
Ver. 19.

But though I use this strong language, and well know that I am approaching the termination of my course, and know not how my imprisonment will end, and am prepared to welcome the issue whatever it be, I do not mean that you should suppose that I am in immediate danger. No; I hope first to be cheered with good tidings from you. I hope, therefore, that the Lord Jesus, whose servant I am, and whose directions I obey, will permit me in a short time to spare the evangelist Timothy to make you a friendly visit, and from him I hope to receive such a report of you, and of the prosperous state of religion among you, as will yield me the highest satisfaction and comfort.

For I have no one here of a like disposition with him³, who will sincerely concern himself in your affairs. For all seek their own interest, rather than⁴ that of Christ Jesus.

20.

21.

I send Timothy in preference to any other person, because I have no one here who enters so cordially into my views and feelings, and who is so deeply interested in your character and conduct as he; or who is so ready to make any sacrifice which may be requisite to promote your comfort and improvement. Indeed I have many friends with me whose characters I highly respect; but they are not particularly known to you, and rather wish to remain here, or to be employed in services less hazardous and laborious; and, to say the truth, some of them are perhaps too much disposed to prefer their own inclination, ease, and security, to the success of the gospel, and incline to go where they may be most comfortable, rather than where they may be most useful.

from whom he received his commission, and with whom he appears occasionally to have been favoured with personal intercourse, and to have been directed by him in his various journeys.

Mr. Peirce judiciously remarks, "that St. Paul having declared his readiness to lay down his life for them, apprehended how tenderly they would take it; and therefore, to prevent their being over much concerned, he here tells them that, however willing he was to die for them, he did not expect to do so presently; and acquaints them that when he could see which way his affair was like to turn, he should be able to spare them Timothy, from whom he expected a good account of them."

³ *Of a like disposition with him.*] *ισοψυχον*. So Newcome and Doddridge. This appears to me to suit the connexion better than the sense which Peirce gives to the word "like-affected to myself." See 2 Cor. xii. 18, 1 Cor. xvi. 10. The apostle's meaning seems to be: That of the associates who were then with him, none felt so much concern for the Philippians as Timothy; and none would exert himself so much, or submit to so many inconveniences to serve them.

⁴ *Rather than.*] See Peirce. In the original, "all seek their own, not the things of Christ Jesus." The apostle probably only means to speak comparatively, though the negative is used absolutely here, as in many other places, Matt. ix. 13, vi. 19, 20, 34; John vi. 27; 1 Cor. x. 24. The apostle can hardly mean to pass an unqualified censure upon all his associates who were then with him, though none of them perhaps might be equal in zeal and self-denial to this young evangelist, and they might all be very reluctant to leave the society of Paul in order to carry a message to Philippi. It is highly probable that Luke and Mark were both with him when he wrote this epistle. See Philem. v. 24.

Ch. II.
Ver. 22.
23.

But of him ye know the proof¹; that as a son with a father², so he hath served with me for the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him forth; with, as soon as I shall see the issue of my affairs³.

My young friend and fellow-labourer Timothy breathes a very different spirit. You well recollect his behaviour during the critical and dangerous season of my ministry at Philippi; how firm, how active, how zealous, he was in propagating the gospel; and to what hazards he exposed himself in a place where I was myself so severely treated. You observed also how affectionately he behaved to me, how tenderly he sympathized with me, and the filial deference which he constantly showed to my advice and instructions. So that we appeared like a father and a son who were fellow-servants of the same master, and commissioned upon the same perilous and important errand, vying with each other who should best approve his zeal and fidelity in the service. I hope to send him to you soon, but not till my appeal has been decided in the imperial court, the result of which I know you will be anxious to hear, and the tidings of which he shall immediately convey to you.

2. The apostle expresses his hope that he should soon follow his friend, and make the Philippians a visit in person, ver. 24.

24. *But I am confident in the Lord⁴, that I shall soon come to you myself.*

You may perhaps suspect, from the hints which I have dropped, that I am apprehensive that the issue of my trial may be fatal. But I assure you, on the contrary, that I have the highest expectation of a speedy release from my long confinement; and in this case, if I may indulge my own inclinations, one of my first visits shall be to you. And I am persuaded that my beloved and honoured master will not, in this instance, oppose the desire of his faithful servant.

¹ *The proof.*] Timothy was in company with Paul and Silas when they preached the gospel at Philippi, Acts xvi. 1—3. “There were few,” says Dr. Priestley, “so wholly devoted to the service of the gospel, and who paid so little regard to their own ease and safety, as Timothy. The apostle had before expressed some chagrin at the conduct of Demas, and even that of Crescens and Titus, for deserting him, and consulting their own safety by flight.”

² *As a son with a father.*] “sicut patri filius mecum inserviverit religioni. Non dicit Paulus, Timotheus mihi servivit, sed mecum servivit, et quidem evangelio εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, et ita quidem ut me, ut patrem filius, observaret, mihiq; in omnibus obsequentem se præberet.” Rosenmuller. “Assure yourselves of Timothy’s approved faithfulness, for he has been to me as a child to his father in the service of the gospel.” Wakefield.

³ *As soon as I shall see, &c.*] ὡς ἂν ἀπιδῶ τὰ περὶ ἐμῆ “ubi videro, quid de me futurum sit.” Rosenmuller. “Him, then, I hope to send as soon as ever I shall see the issue of this affair with me.” Wakefield.

⁴ *Confident in the Lord.*] See the note on ver. 19.

3. In the mean time he thought fit to send back Epaphroditus immediately, of whose character and services he expresses the highest approbation, and whom he warmly recommends to their affection and esteem, ver. 25—30. Ch. II.

Yet I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus⁵ my brother and fellow-labourer, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger and minister to my wants⁶; for he greatly longed after you all, and was much dejected⁷ because ye had heard that he was sick. For indeed he hath been sick, near unto death; but God had pity upon him, and not upon him only, but upon me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow⁸. Ver. 25.
26.
27.

⁵ *Epaphroditus.*] Grotius supposes this person to be the same with Epaphras, who is mentioned in the epistles to the Colossians and Philemon: Col. i. 7, iv. 12; Philem. v. 23. It is indeed probable that Epaphras was at that time with Paul; but he seems to have been particularly connected with the church at Colossé, as Epaphroditus was with that at Philippi. Dr. Jones has laboured with his usual learning and ingenuity to prove that Epaphroditus was the celebrated freedman of the emperor Nero; but this is hardly consistent with his having been employed by the Philippians (ch. iv. 18) to convey their present to the apostle; or his being described (ch. ii. 25) as their apostle and teacher. Dr. J. Jones's *Series of Facts*, chap. 4.

⁶ *Your messenger and minister to my wants.*] ὑμῶν δὲ ἀποστολὸν, καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου. “minister of my concerns; literally, of this business of mine; meaning the particular errand on which he went.” Wakefield. “your apostle, and who is now to act for me with you.” Peirce. “whom you are now to regard as your apostle, and my substitute.” Harwood. “*Vestrum autem apostolum et mei muneris vicarium.*” Castellio. The common translation, however, which is that of Newcome, and adopted in the text, may be defended. *χρεία* is used in the sense of *necessity*, ch. iv. 16, 19. The opposition in the clauses of the sentence is sufficiently supported, if the first clause is supposed to express the reasons why the apostle wished to detain Epaphroditus, and the latter the grounds upon which it was expedient that he should depart. *λειτουργὸς τῆς χρείας* may be uncommon, but Mr. Peirce does not pretend that it is unallowable. Indeed *ἀποστολὸς τῶν ἐθνῶν* is a similar construction. And it is certainly very unusual for the minister of a church to be called its apostle. The common interpretation is favoured by ver. 30.

⁷ *Much dejected.*] “full of anguish.” Newcome. ἀδημονῶν. Erasmus says that the word signifies *to be almost killed with grief*.

⁸ *That I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.*] It has been before observed that Dr. Paley notices the case of Epaphroditus as a proof that the apostles did not possess the power of working miracles at pleasure. Dr. Priestley makes the same observation; “otherwise (he remarks) Paul no doubt would not have suffered this Epaphroditus, whom he esteemed so highly, and others of his fellow Christians whose sickness he mentions, and whose lives he imagined to be of value for the propagation of the gospel, to continue in circumstances so painful to themselves, and so detrimental to the cause in which they were engaged. Miraculous power does not appear to have been in any case subject to the will of men, our Saviour and the apostles always feeling a supernatural impulse upon their minds, whenever divine wisdom judged a miracle to be proper.”

I am fully ready to concede this point with respect to the apostles; but he to whom the spirit was communicated without measure, appears to have possessed a power of performing at pleasure that class of miracles which were necessary for establishing his character and claims as the Son of God, the Messiah foretold by the prophets.

Dr. Priestley adds, “With respect to the miraculous healing of sickness, it is observed that it was seldom exerted in favour of preachers of the gospel, but generally of indifferent persons, though they might afterwards be won upon, by such marks of divine favour, to embrace the gospel. By this means the evidence of the miracles was less liable to suspicion.”

Ch. II.
Ver. 27.

Though I cannot at present spare Timothy, yet I think it highly requisite to send Epaphroditus back to you immediately, both that he may carry this token of my affection, may inform you of the particulars of my situation, and that he may renew his ministerial labours among you. I should indeed have rejoiced to have kept him with me, both to have enjoyed his society as a Christian friend, and to have engaged him as an associate in the toils and dangers of my apostolic mission. But I consider you as possessing a prior claim to his eminently useful services. He came hither as the messenger of your liberality to me; it would therefore be inexcusable to detain him without your approbation. And indeed he is himself very anxious to return to you, being exceedingly desirous to see you again, especially since he has heard how much you were affected by the account you received of his late illness; and he cannot enjoy any peace till he has relieved your affectionate solicitude for him. And indeed he has been very dangerously ill; but God in great mercy, both to him and to me, has dispelled our fears and restored his health; for truly, if I had lost so dear a friend, I should have been overwhelmed with an accumulation of distress.

28. *I have sent him, therefore, the more speedily¹, that when ye see him again ye*
 29. *may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful². Receive him, therefore,*
 30. *in the Lord³, with all joy, and hold such in high estimation. For because*
of the work of Christ he was near to death, having exposed his own life⁴,
that he might supply the remainder of your kind offices towards me⁵.

¹ *Speedily.*] “σπευδαισπεως, festinantiùs.” Vulg. See Peirce. “à σπευδαιος, festinans.” Schleusner.

² *Less sorrowful.*] “Because my sympathy in your concern about Epaphroditus will be removed.” Newcome.

³ *In the Lord.*] “As a Christian minister.” Peirce. “as a fellow-disciple of the Lord.” Newcome.

⁴ *Having exposed his own life.*] παραβολευσάμενος, according to the Alexandrine and other manuscripts of the best authority. “parabolatus de animâ sud.” Vulg. See Griesbach. “Parabolani sunt qui se in periculum maximum projiciunt.” Rob. Steph. *Thes. Linguae Latinae*. Epaphroditus, by the fatigue he had undergone in the execution of his commission, had probably brought on a fever, which had endangered his life. “Epaphroditus had exposed his own life to the utmost danger, as they did who took care of people infected with the pestilence, who were called *parabolani*; or as they did who fought with wild beasts. Vid. Socrat. *H. E.* lib. 7. c. 22.” Peirce; who conjectures that the danger was incurred by sickness brought on by fatigue, and that it must have happened some time before, “as the news had not only been carried to Philippi, but the knowledge of their being acquainted with it had been brought back to Rome.”

⁵ *That he might supply, &c.*] “that he might supply your lack of service towards me:” το ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα της προς με λειτουργίας. “Our translators, (whose version is here given,)” says Mr. Wakefield, “quite misunderstood the passage. The defect of the Philippians, or rather towards them, was the apostle’s inability to come himself, which he sent Epaphroditus to supply.” His own translation is, “making no account of his life, that he might fill up the deficiency of my service towards you.” But without stopping to inquire whether the words will

For these reasons I was the more desirous to send him back to you without delay, both that you might have the satisfaction to see your friend in good health, and that I might share in your joy, and be under less apprehension on your account. Receive him then, my brethren, with a cheerful welcome, as your faithful minister in the gospel of our common Lord; and hold such able and zealous servants of Christ in the highest respect and affection. Epaphroditus eminently deserves it at your hands: his late dangerous sickness was brought on by his too ardent exertions to fulfill the generous commission with which you had entrusted him in my behalf. Benevolence so active and disinterested cannot be too highly prized.

Ch. II.
Ver. 30.

SECTION V.

THE APOSTLE warns the Philippians against being misled by the artifices of judaizing zealots, and exhibits his own conduct as an example of an absolute renunciation of dependence upon any legal pretensions as the ground of acceptance with God. Ch. iii. 1.—iv. 1.

Ch. III.

1. The apostle apologizes to his friends for insisting upon the same topics which he had given in charge to Epaphroditus, ver. 1.

As to what remains, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord⁶. To write the same things⁷ to you is not irksome to me, and to you it is safe.

Ver. 1.

To proceed, my brethren and beloved friends, to the advice which I would now offer as peculiarly suitable to your present circumstances: my first exhortation is, Rejoice in, and be thankful for, that liberal dispensation of which you partake, and which imposes upon you no harsh and insupportable

admit of this translation, the version of Peirce, Newcome, and others, seems more natural, and better suited to the connexion: "exposing his life to the most 'imminent danger, that he might fill up the remainder of your beneficence to me.'" "*Id mihi præstaret, quod præstare, vestri erat officii.*" Castalio.

The Public Version appears to express the true meaning of the passage. Epaphroditus fell sick through fatigue, occasioned by his zealous exertions to supply your place; by attempting to do what you would have done for me had you been at Rome: or, as Archbishop Newcome expresses it, "by conveying your supply to me, and giving me personal attendance." See 2 Cor. x. 8, 9.

⁶ *Rejoice in the Lord.*] "as Christians: in your Christian privileges and hopes." Newcome.

⁷ *The same things:*] i. e. "which I have delivered in charge to Epaphroditus." Peirce.—"which I have inculcated when present with you; or, which I have written to other churches." Newcome. I prefer Peirce's interpretation. Two manuscripts read *ταυτα*, these things.

Ch. III.
Ver. 1.

yoke. I have desired Epaphroditus to warn you against a delusion of which you are in some danger. I shall now address the same warning to you; and shall think it no trouble to repeat to you what I have said to him, and the advice will probably come to you with greater effect when you observe the perfect coincidence in the doctrine of those whom you have been used to regard as your instructors in Christian truth.

2. He briefly warns them against those evil-minded teachers who would seduce them into a needless subjection to the ceremonial law, ver. 2, 3.

2. *Beware of the dogs*¹, *beware of the evil labourers*², *beware of the concision*³. *For we are the circumcision who worship God by the spirit*⁴, *and who glory in Christ Jesus, and place no confidence in the flesh.*

When I consider what they are who attempt to rob you of your liberty and your peace, when I call to mind their restless malice and their hypocritical professions, I cannot restrain my indignation. Be, therefore, much upon your guard against those fierce and hungry dogs who wish to break in upon and to devour the flock, I mean those false teachers who are exerting their utmost endeavours to pervert your faith, to alienate your affections

¹ *Beware of the dogs.*] "The apostle seems to retort upon the wicked and persecuting Jews the name given by them to the Gentiles." Newcome. See Isa. lvi. 10—12, Rev. xxii. 15, Matt. vii. 6. "cruel, fierce, and mischievous." Peirce. "It was customary with the Jews," says Dr. Priestley, "as well as with other Oriental nations, to denote particular characters by the names of those animals in which they predominate. Thus our Saviour, 'Cast not your pearls before swine,' 'Go and tell that fox.' Here the name *dog* probably means persons of a quarrelsome disposition, always ready to promote contention and division: which was the character of the judaizing teachers."

² *The evil labourers.*] not merely evil-doers. *εργατης*, *operarius*, a labourer in any business: here the apostle means labourers who set up to be teachers. *κακας εργατας*, *evil labourers*, similar to *κακουργες*, persons who act fraudulently and deceitfully. See Peirce. In 2 Cor. xi. 13 the apostle calls the same persons *deceitful labourers*.

³ *The concision.*] An expression of contempt, denying them a right to the title of *περιτομη*, the circumcision, in which they gloried. "those who rend and divide the church." Peirce. Mr. Wakefield translates the passage, "Beware of those dogs, beware of their wicked practices, beware of their biting you." In this last clause he professes to follow an interpretation in Gataker's *Advers. Miscell.* p. 826. *κατατομη*, *concisio*, *mutilatio*: *q. d.* The rite being now abolished, is no longer entitled to its former honourable name. Theophylact *apud* Schleusner. "We are not to infer from this," says Dr. Priestley, "that the apostle undervalued circumcision, or any other part of the Jewish ritual. Had he thought the law of Moses to be abolished by the gospel with respect to the Jews, he certainly would never have circumcised Timothy; especially as his mother only, and not his father, was of Jewish extraction. All that he says in contempt of Jewish observances, is only to be understood of them in comparison of moral virtues, on which alone any stress is laid in the gospel, and which the superstitious attachment of the Jews to their ceremonies led them to neglect."

⁴ *Who worship God, &c.*] the spirit; *i. e.* the gospel, as opposed to the law of rites. See Gal. iii. 3, 5, iv. 29, v. 5; Rom. ii. 29. *we glory in Christ Jesus*: *i. e.* in our faith in and relation to Jesus as the Messiah. *and have no confidence in the flesh*: *i. e.* in subjection to the law.

from your faithful instructors, and to make a prey of you. Beware of those men who, preaching up the necessity of Jewish rites, are in fact dividing and rending asunder the church of Christ by their schismatical and sectarian spirit. They call themselves, indeed, the chosen and the holy people of God; they glory in their conformity to the ceremonial law, and they place their confidence in the seals and symbols of the Mosaic institute. But in this, if they are sincere, they are most egregiously mistaken: for we, my friends, are the true and accepted people of God who worship the Father of our spirits agreeably to the terms of the new dispensation; who glory, not in being the adherents of Moses, but the disciples of Jesus the true Messiah; and who place our confidence, not in the symbols of the old and superseded covenant, but in our conformity to the terms of the new and better dispensation.

3. The apostle shows that no one ever had greater cause than himself to boast in Jewish privileges, and ritual conformity, ver. 4—6.

Although I might have confidence, even in the flesh. If any other may presume to have confidence in the flesh⁵, I still more. Circumcised on the eighth day⁶, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of Hebrews⁷; concerning the law, a pharisee; concerning zeal, a persecutor of the church⁸; concerning justification by the law⁹, blameless.

4.

5.

6.

⁵ *Presume, &c.*] See Mr. Wakefield. *in the flesh*. The context plainly shows, that by *the flesh*, the apostle means the rites, privileges, and profession of a Jew educated under the law.

⁶ *Circumcised the eighth day.*] See Bowyer, Newcome, and Griesbach, for the construction of the original. Dr. Doddridge observes, that "the Jews did not only lay a great deal of stress on the rite of circumcision, but on the time of performing it, *i. e.* exactly the eighth day; and that the LXX. have an addition to Gen. xvii. 14, which is also in the Samaritan Pentateuch, 'the male-child which is not circumcised the eighth day shall be cut off from among his people.'" It is generally supposed that the apostle in these observations refers to some particular person who was the leader of the judaizing party in the church at Philippi, and who made great boasts of his Jewish privileges.

⁷ *Hebrew of Hebrews.*] *i. e.* a Hebrew of the purest pedigree: or, as some think, a Hebrew in language, in opposition to the Hellenistic Jews, who used the LXX. See Newcome.

⁸ *A persecutor of the church.*] "St. Paul was far from accounting this a virtue: he freely condemns it elsewhere as a grievous sin. 1 Cor. xv. 9, 1 Tim. i. 13. All, therefore, he can mean by what he says is, that if a zeal for the law were, as the Jews thought, a ground of confidence, he could with a witness pretend to it, since his zeal had been so great for it as to lead him to persecute the Christians, because he thought they dishonoured it." Peirce.

⁹ *Justification by the law.*] This is opposed, ver. 9, to justification by faith in Christ. The former is that state of privilege which a Jew obtained by an exact conformity to the Mosaic ritual. In this respect the apostle was comparatively blameless: no person had a better claim than he to the reward which was due to ceremonial obedience. See Peirce and Macknight.—"the imperfect justification which can only make me appear blameless as to legal transgression in the sight of men." Newcome.

Ch. III.
Ver. 6.

Your false teachers boast of their Jewish extraction, and of their strict adherence to Jewish rites, which they represent as essential to acceptance with God. But be assured, that under the gospel dispensation all this is of no value. Impute not this disavowal to envy, or to any consciousness of defect on my part: I am equal, yea superior, to every one of them in those claims to merit which Judaism can give. So that if any confidence could be placed in such kind of privileges or of works, as entitling men to the divine favour, I, above the proudest of them all, have a right to boast this confidence. I was circumcised, as the law prescribes, precisely on the eighth day after my birth. I am a genuine descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the promises were made; I am of the tribe of Benjamin, one of the two which returned from the captivity. I am a Hebrew of the purest pedigree: both my parents were of the Hebrew nation, and descendants of Hebrew ancestors. I was educated at Jerusalem in a strict observance of the law; I was admitted a member of the rigid sect of the pharisees, and was as rigorous in my external conduct as any of that fraternity. I was beyond measure zealous for judaical rites, and for that reason a vehement persecutor of those who professed to hold the doctrine of Jesus in higher estimation than the law of Moses. So that, if lineal descent from the Abrahamic family, if early initiation, if intemperate zeal, if rigid profession, could entitle any one to justification in the sight of God, I may challenge the whole Jewish nation to produce one who possesses a claim superior to my own.

4. The apostle explicitly disclaims all merit of this kind, and rests his hope of acceptance with God upon his faith in Jesus Christ, ver. 7—9.

7. *But these things, which were once gain to me, I accounted loss for*
8. *Christ¹. Yea doubtless, and I account all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ² Jesus my Lord; for whose sake I have cast away³*

¹ Gain—loss.] *κερδη—ζημιαν*, profit and loss in commercial speculation. The apostle represents this ceremonial righteousness, which he once valued as his choicest treasure, as being now in his estimation nothing but refuse and lumber, which he had thrown overboard to make room for that justification by faith which was a prize of the highest value. See Peirce.

² Knowledge of Christ.] “By the knowledge of Christ Jesus we are to understand the knowledge of Christianity; so also by *winning Christ* is to be understood gaining the rewards of Christianity. With Christ himself, personally considered, we can have nothing to do; and the manner in which many enthusiastic persons have expressed themselves on this subject is highly reprehensible.” Dr. Priestley.

³ Cast away all these things.] “*ζημιωω* has two senses; one to *suffer loss or damage*, the other to *part with or throw away*, in order to prevent a greater detriment, as when goods are thrown overboard to save the ship.” Peirce. See Grotius on Matt. xvi. 26.

all these things, and do account them but refuse⁴, that I might gain Christ⁵ and be found in him⁶, not having my own justification, which is by the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ⁷: even the justification which is from God by faith.

Ch. III.

Ver. 9.

Upon these external distinctions I once laid a most unreasonable stress, and thought highly of my character and state on account of them. But I now view them in a very different light; and what I then valued most I now regard as of no real worth: and indeed as worse than nothing, if they are placed in competition with the blessings of the gospel. Yes indeed, my dear brethren, I solemnly assure you that I reckon, not only these proud distinctions, but all the most valued blessings of life, as nothing, as a price infinitely below the value of that saving doctrine of my master Jesus Christ; which in its sublimity, in its evidence, and in its glorious effects, far surpasses every thing which bears the name of learning or science.

For the acquisition of this most excellent knowledge I have in fact sacrificed all that was most dear and valuable in life; my most endearing and useful connexions, my temporal interest, my flattering prospects, and even my fondest prejudices; and have exposed myself to poverty, to contempt, to persecution, and to death in its most terrifying forms. I have, as it were, cast overboard all that I once thought precious. But I am far from repenting of the sacrifices I have made; for though I would not undervalue the

⁴ *Refuse.*] σκεῦαλα. “*Latissime patet hoc vocabulum, et quodvis vile rejectamentum notat.*” Schleusner.

⁵ *That I might gain Christ:*] that is, the blessings of his gospel. This is the treasure which I now seek after, and for which I have cast away what I formerly most highly prized. “He seems here to consider Christ as the most important and valuable thing, which he was therefore solicitous to secure to himself above every thing; and his meaning is, That I may attain the knowledge of Christ and faith in him, so as to have him for my Saviour, and be entitled to all the advantages which belong to those who are found in him.” Peirce.

⁶ *Be found in him.*] See chap. ii. 7. *To be found in Christ* is the same as to be in him; and to be in Christ, is to believe in him and to profess his doctrine. See Rom. xvi. 7, 11. Mr. Peirce considers the text as parallel to Gal. iii. 27, according to Mr. Locke’s interpretation: Believers having put on Christ are clothed with him, so that God, looking on, sees nothing but Christ. “This expression, being *found in Christ*,” says Dr. Priestley, “which has been so much abused by ignorant and enthusiastic persons, means nothing more than continuing in the profession of Christianity. Also by his *own righteousness which was of the law*, the apostle means, not moral virtue, which he was very far from undervaluing, but the mere observance of the Mosaic ritual. And that *righteousness which is by faith in Christ*, means that virtue or ground of justification in the sight of God which is taught in the gospel, independently of the law.”

⁷ *That which is through the faith of Christ.*] That state of privilege and acceptance with God, which was to be attained by faith in Christ without submitting to the rites of the law; of which justification the apostle treats at large in his epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians. It was a state in which they were admitted to all the outward privileges of the gospel; and which, if practically improved, would entitle them to an interest in its spiritual and everlasting blessings.

Ch. III.
Ver. 9.

blessings of life, when they are to be obtained in consistence with duty, I would nevertheless cheerfully discard them all, as I would cast away the vilest refuse, if this self-denial should be necessary to securing the prize at which I aim, a true knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, and an interest in the blessings of the gospel; that I may be justified in the sight of God, not by ritual merits, which is all that I could ever pretend to, but by faith in Jesus as the Christ, which is the reasonable and sole condition of the gospel covenant. This justification, this happy state of acceptance and of privilege, is the free gift of God to all who, convinced by the evidence proposed, receive and acknowledge Jesus as the Christ.

5. The apostle pants after this practical knowledge of Christ, to whatever dangers or sufferings it may lead, being confident that it must terminate in a resurrection to immortal happiness, ver. 10, 11.

10. *That I may know Christ*¹, *and the efficacy of his resurrection*², *and the*
11. *participation of his sufferings*³; *being made conformable to his death*⁴, *so that, in any way, I may arrive at the resurrection of the dead*⁵.

¹ *That I may know Christ.*] *τὸ γινῶσκειν*. The English version supposes the infinitive to be put for the subjunctive, and that *τὸ γινῶσκειν* answers to *εὐρεθῶ*, ver. 9. Bengelius supposes the infinitive to be taken as a gerund, and to be governed by *πιστεῖ*, 'the faith of knowing him.' Peirce supposes it governed by *δικαιοσύνην* (see ver. 21,) the righteousness of knowing, or which consists in knowing, Christ. This interpretation would be more probable if the intervening words *ἐπὶ τῇ πιστεῖ*, should be dropped, as they are in the Ethiopic and Syriac; and by Mr. Wakefield, whose translation is, "so as to know Christ."

² *Efficacy of his resurrection.*] "its power of confirming my faith in him, and my hope of salvation through him." Macknight. See 1 Pet. i. 3.

³ *Participation of his sufferings.*] "either those which he himself endured, or which are allotted to his disciples, for his sake and in his cause. The latter the more probable." Peirce.

⁴ *Conformable to his death.*] *εὐρεθῶ συμμορφούμενος* see ver. 9. Grotius. *may be found conformable to his death*. The Alexandrine and Clermont copies read *συμμορφιζόμενος*, *made conformable*; which Griesbach marks as the preferable reading. Peirce justly observes, that "though dying to sin is several times spoken of as a conformity to Christ in his death, Rom. vi. 3, &c., yet conformity to his death by dying for his sake seems to be more agreeable to the scope of this place. Rom. viii. 17, 2 Cor. iv. 10—14."—Dr. Priestley observes, that "the apostle alludes to his sufferings in the same cause with Christ, and his expectation of the same reward after death. From many other expressions it appears that the apostle did not consider the sufferings of Christ as of a peculiar nature, having any other cause or effect than the sufferings of other good men in a good cause. The public death of Christ was absolutely necessary, as a preparation to the proper evidence of his resurrection. Had he died a natural death and then appeared again, it might have been said that he had never died at all: it was therefore wisely ordered in the course of divine providence, that his death should be as public as possible. His resurrection was so circumstanced as to have the highest degree of credibility at this distance of time."

⁵ *Resurrection of the dead.*] Mr. Peirce observes, that the expression "*εἰ*" has not always a dubitative signification, 1 Tim. v. 10, Acts xxvi. 23; nor necessarily so when followed by *πῶς*, nor is it to be so understood here." *κατανταῶ* signifies, to arrive at a harbour; so that the apostle still keeps up his beautiful metaphor. Acts xviii. 19, 24, xxvi. 7. The apostle is here speaking of the resurrection of the just. And as the Philippians were personally acquainted

The great prize of which I am ambitious, and the possession of which will amply compensate for every loss, is that state of privilege, and hope, and peace, which is the result, not of the knowledge and profession merely, but of a practical conviction of the truth of the Christian doctrine, a conviction founded upon that amazing display of divine power by which Jesus was raised from the dead, and was made the pledge and pattern of the final resurrection of all his faithful disciples to immortal life and happiness. Nay, I am not unwilling to be a fellow-sufferer with him, to endure the ignominy and torture to which he was exposed, and to resign even life itself, if this sacrifice should be necessary to my safe arrival at the desired haven: to the attainment of that which is the great object of my triumphant expectation, and the glorious reward of all my toils and dangers and sufferings, a resurrection to life and happiness uninterrupted and everlasting. And I am persuaded that you, my brethren, among whom I laboured so long, who were also witnesses to my sufferings for the gospel, will give credit to my assertion, and will not regard it as a vainglorious boast: but will yourselves be disposed to follow my example and to act the same wise and honourable part.

Ch. III.
Ver. 11.

6. He does not pretend that he has as yet obtained the object to which he aspires, but he professes to be incessantly reaching forwards towards it, ver. 12—14.

I say *not*⁶ that I have already received the prize, or already finished my race⁷; but I press forward, that I may lay hold on that⁸ for which I also have

12.

with him, there was a propriety in appealing to what they had observed in his conduct which there would not have been in writing to the Colossians, who had never seen him. See Peirce's excellent note upon this text. "arrive at a complete resurrection from dead works." Wakefield.

⁶ I say *not*.] The expression in the original is elliptical: *I say* is supplied by Peirce and Newcome. The apostle here changes his metaphor, and represents himself as in the situation of a man who is candidate for a prize in the races at the Grecian games, who is continually pressing forward till he reaches the goal. Mr. Peirce thinks that the apostle intends a secret comparison between his own character and that of the false teachers, who regarded and represented themselves as having attained perfection by their zealous conformity to the ceremonial law. But the apostle, though he had as good reason for boasting in this respect as they, was so far from regarding himself as complete in every particular and fully entitled to the prize, that he thought it necessary to stretch every nerve in order to maintain his ground and to secure final success.

⁷ Finished my race.] So Mr. Wakefield. The false teachers fancied that their labours were finished, they had only to receive the prize; but the apostle had no such vain thought of himself. "am already perfected in evangelical excellence." Newcome. Comp. ver. 15.

⁸ That I may lay hold, &c.] *εἰ καὶ καταλάβω*. So Peirce; who considers *εἰ καὶ* as similar to *εἰ πως*, ver. 11, not expressing any doubt in the apostle's mind. Castellio renders the phrase *ut comprehendam*. Yet still it may be doubted whether the apostle, in opposition to the bold

Ch. III.
Ver. 13.

14. *been laid hold on¹ by Christ². Brethren, I do not reckon³ myself to have laid hold on it: but neglecting those that are behind, and stretching forward to those before, I pursue one thing, according to my design⁴, for the prize of that invitation of God from above⁵ by Christ Jesus.*

Others, if they please, may boast the perfection of their character and the happiness of their state, in uniting the privileges of the disciples of Moses with the hopes of believers in Christ. I am not their inferior in either of these respects, and yet I am far from pretending, either that I have attained the prize of my ambition, or the perfection of those qualifications which are requisite for this purpose. Nevertheless, as Jesus mercifully arrested me in the midst of a course of hardened unbelief and fiery persecuting zeal, and has graciously enlisted me in his service, I now steadily pursue the great object for the sake of which I became a believer and was constituted an apostle. Indeed, my brethren, I pretend not to perfection, either in character or in state. But I have entered the lists, and I am resolved to press forward till I have reached the goal and won the prize. Not trusting to past merits and services, nor comparing myself with those whom I have left behind, I will still exert myself to the utmost in my Master's work, making it my sole aim to obtain that glorious reward which God has promised in the gospel of his Son to those who obey the heavenly call, and who persevere to the end of their course.

7. The apostle urges the Philippians to follow his example, and expresses his hope that God will communicate to them all necessary truth, ver. 15, 16.

confidence of the false teachers, did not mean to represent himself as under some degree of anxiety with regard to the issue of his exertions. Mr. Wakefield renders the words, "I am still pursuing if I may after all lay hold," &c.

¹ *Laid hold on.*] "The apostle, playing upon a word, represents himself as made a prize of by Christ, while he himself is desirous of obtaining that for which Christ made a prize of him." Dr. Priestley.

² *Christ.*] This is the reading of the best copies: the received text reads *Christ Jesus*. See Griesbach.

³ *I do not reckon.*] "This will ever be the disposition of a mind truly virtuous. Every man who knows himself will be sensible of his imperfections, and if he be a good man he will be continually striving to remove them, and make nearer approaches to perfection." Dr. Priestley.

⁴ *I pursue one thing, &c.*] "Join *εν δε* with *κατα σκοπον διωκω*, including the intermediate words in a parenthesis." Peirce and Bowyer. Peirce says he has no where met with good authorities to prove that *σκοπος* signifies the same as *τερμα*, the goal. He translates the words, therefore, "according to my aim or design." He admits that *εν διωκω, επι το βραζειον* is unusual, but he refers to Prov. xx. 6, LXX. as perfectly parallel.

⁵ *Invitation of God from above.*] See Wakefield. The judges, seated on an eminence, summon the competitors to enter the lists. See Macknight.

Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect men⁶, be of this mind; and if ye differ in any thing⁷, God will reveal this likewise to you. Nevertheless, as to what we have attained, let us walk therein⁸.

Ch. III.
15.
16.

Upon the whole, then, let all of us who profess the faith of Christ, who are no longer babes but grown up men, and who have been well instructed in the doctrine and in the liberty of the gospel, be unanimous in our resolution that we will not be enslaved to the yoke of the ceremonial law, but that we will make it our chief study and our constant aim to obey the laws of Christ. And if there be any other points concerning which you differ in opinion, and in which you are not fully informed, if you are sincere lovers of truth, and open to conviction, using at the same time the proper means of inquiry, there is great reason to believe that God will, in one way or other, correct your errors, and lead you into all important truth. To this end let your practice keep pace with your knowledge. Let us all act up to the principles and to the spirit of the gospel. If we improve the light we have, we may reasonably hope that more will be communicated.

8. The apostle still more explicitly presses upon the Philippians to follow his example, and cautions them against the practices of selfish and seducing teachers, ver. 17—21.

Brethren, be ye together imitators of me, and observe those who walk after the pattern which ye have in us⁹.

17.

My christian brethren, I have plainly stated to you my principles, views, and conduct; that I am by birth a Jew, and entitled to claim all the privileges of the disciples of Moses to a degree beyond what any one else can

⁶ Perfect men.] τελαιοι, perfect, q. d. persons thoroughly instructed in the Christian doctrine. See 1 Cor. ii. 6, we speak wisdom among those that are perfect. It is opposed to νηπιος, a child. 1 Cor. xiv. 20, Heb. v. 13, 14. "Let us, as many as are perfect men, think thus as to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." Newcome. In opposition to Judaizers. "grown up men not babes in Christ." Wakefield; who "suspects the purity of the latter part of the verse."

⁷ If ye differ, &c.] ει τι ετερως φρονειτε. Mr. Peirce understands ετερως here, of differing with one another. They were all sufficiently instructed in the Christian doctrine not to be imposed upon by judaizing teachers; if there were any other points concerning which they were in doubt, God would, in one way or other, communicate instruction. Revelation does not always express new inspiration. See Locke on Eph. i. 17.

⁸ Let us walk therein.] The received text reads, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. But the Alexandrine manuscript and some ancient versions leave out the words κανονι, το αυτο φρονειν, and these words are omitted in the editions of Griesbach and Newcome.

⁹ Observe those, &c.] See Wakefield. The apostle here contrasts his own character and that of his colleagues with those of the judaizing zealots. "Here," says Peirce, "the reason very plainly appears why he said so much of himself in the foregoing verses."

Ch. III.
Ver. 17.

pretend to; that nevertheless I have renounced all for the sake of Christ; and that my sole object now is to comply with the requisitions and to secure the rewards of the gospel. You well know that I have not misrepresented my character and aims. Be, then, all of you without exception, imitators of me in these respects; and observe the conduct of those who habitually follow my example, the wise and faithful teachers who are settled among you, or the excellent person who bears this epistle to you; and mark how far superior their character shines above that of their opponents who disclaim my authority, and would subvert our faith.

18. *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even*
19. *weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ¹; whose end is destruction², whose God is their belly³, and whose glory is in their shame⁴, who affect earthly things⁵.*

There are many in the Christian church, and it is well if there are not some even among you, who are of a character the reverse of that which I have described. I often mentioned them to you when I was present with you, and cautioned you against their seducing and mischievous arts. I now renew my caution to you again; and, anxious for your welfare, I with tears warn you against those artful and wicked teachers, who conceal their enmity to the doctrine of Christ and their shame of the cross, by an affectation of zeal for the Mosaic ritual; the tendency of whose doctrine, whatever they may think or profess, is to the ruin of themselves and of their hearers; who, whatever pretences they make to peculiar sanctity, are in fact the slaves of luxury and intemperance, and seek only for the means of gratifying their appetite; who glory in their blind subjection to a ritual, to which, as professors of Christianity, it is a disgrace to them to be in bondage; and who

¹ *They are enemies, &c.*] The apostle is here speaking of the judaizing teachers who were ashamed of the cross, who taught the obligation of the ceremonial law, which had been abolished by the death of Christ; who preached the gospel with mercenary views, and who were men of immoral characters, 2 Cor. xi. 13, 15, 20, 1 Tim. vi. 5.

² *Destruction.*] ἀπωλεία “the ruin of others.” Mr. Wakefield, *Comp.* c. 1. 28. “These men reckon upon your destruction, but they will certainly meet with their own.” Peirce.

³ *Whose God is their belly.*] who aim at nothing but their own gratification. See Rom. xvi. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 5; Tit. i. 11.

“Whatever any person may profess,” says Dr. Priestley, “of friendship for Christ and respect for the gospel, if their lives be not governed by the moral precepts of it, they are to be ranked with its enemies, their conduct tending to bring it into disgrace.”

⁴ *Glory is in their shame.*] “That is, who triumph in that which is really a disgrace; viz. in their circumcision, in their zeal for the law, in the number of their proselytes, in the advantage they derived from them.” Peirce.

⁵ *Who affect earthly things.*] that is, the ordinances and ceremonies of the law which were of an earthly nature. That this sense is included is evident from Col. iii. 1—3. See Peirce.

are enthralled by that low and degrading spirit which is generated by an attachment to the law of Moses and the traditions of the pharisees. Ch. III.

*For we are citizens of heaven*⁶, whence indeed⁷ we are expecting a deliverer⁸, our Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform this our lowly body into the similitude of his glorious body⁹, according to the energy by which he is able even to subject all things to himself¹⁰. Ver. 20. 21.

Follow, then, as I have just observed, the example of me and of your other faithful and approved teachers; for we are members of a celestial community, and are entitled to the blessings and privileges of the new and heavenly dispensation, the laws of which it is our duty to obey. And, as the immediate consequence of this happy change of state, we are now taught to look with joyful expectation for the glorious appearance of our triumphant deliverer Jesus Christ from heaven, who is speedily coming, perhaps much sooner than many apprehend, to raise those who have fallen asleep in him, and to renovate those who shall be living when that awful consummation arrives. Then shall this mortal put on immortality, and these frail and

⁶ *For we are, &c.*] Include the 18th and 19th verses in a parenthesis, *q. d.* Mark those that walk, &c. *for we are citizens of heaven.* See Newcome and Wakefield. Formerly the Jews were in heaven and the Gentiles were on earth, *i. e.* the former were in a covenant, and the latter in an uncovenanted state. Now *they*, the judaizers, are earthly, but we Christians are citizens of heaven. Eph. ii. 6. This interpretation is the more probable if, as Peirce allows, 'earthly things' in the preceding verse express Jewish rites and ceremonies.

⁷ *Whence indeed.*] εξ ἧ. Peirce, and Dr. Owen in Bowyer (see Newcome), with the generality of interpreters, supply τοῦ, *q. d.* from which place. Two copies, of no great account, read εξ ὧν. "This is the most important of all considerations," says Dr. Priestley in his note upon this verse, "Christians should ever consider themselves as citizens of heaven. Our king or sovereign, who was not of this world, and whose kingdom was not of it, is now in heaven; and if we here below behave as the proper subjects of his spiritual kingdom, he will in due time come again, and take us to himself, to our proper country. I would observe, however, that according to this representation, we have nothing to expect from our King and Saviour before his coming to raise the dead, and judge the world."

⁸ *We are expecting a deliverer.*] So Wakefield. The apostle always expresses himself as if the second coming of Christ was very near at hand, so that some then living would be eye-witnesses to it, 1 Thess. iv. 15. The times and seasons were not revealed to him, nor even to Christ himself, Acts i. 7.

⁹ *Will transform, &c.*] μεταχρηματίζει properly expresses a change of the outward appearance, not the substance of the thing spoken of. In the present state we bear the image of the earthly Adam, in the future we are to bear the image of the heavenly, 1 Cor. xv. 45—49. This mortal frame, which we inherit from a mortal ancestor, must be transformed into the similitude of the glorious person of Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 50—54, 1 Thess. iv. 15—17. What the full import of these expressions is, the event only can fully show. See Peirce. "who will change this lowly body of ours into the form, &c." Wakefield.

¹⁰ *According to the energy, &c.*] See 1 Cor. xv. 24—26, 54—57. Mr. Peirce remarks, that this energy and power which is here attributed to Christ, is elsewhere ascribed to God, 1 Cor. vi. 14, for the power which Christ has, he received from the Father; Christ will subdue all things; his dominion will be universal. All the race of mankind will ultimately become subject to his authority; and his enemies, sin and death, all evil natural and moral, shall be destroyed.

CH. III.
Ver. 21.

perishable frames shall, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, be transformed into the similitude of his own glorious person, qualified for immortal life, improvement and felicity. And this great and unknown change shall be produced in us by the energy of that stupendous power which is communicated to him by the Father, by which all his enemies shall be subjected to his authority; and sin and pain and death shall exist no more.

9. The apostle concludes this division of his subject by an affectionate exhortation to steadfastness in their Christian profession, ch. iv. 1.

CH. IV.
Ver. 1.

*Wherefore*¹, *my brethren, beloved and greatly desired, my joy and crown, thus stand firmly*² *in the Lord, my beloved*³.

To conclude: My dear brethren in the faith, children of the same father, heirs of the same immortal hopes, the worthy objects of my complacency and benevolence; whose company and conversation I earnestly desire; but for whose moral and Christian improvement I am still more anxiously solicitous; whose conversion, whose practical and persevering faith, and whose kind remembrance of their persecuted instructor, have been, and continue to be, a source of the purest satisfaction and delight; and to whose joyful appearance with me at the tribunal of our glorious chief, I look forward with transport as to a prize more to be coveted than an imperial diadem; attend, my beloved brethren, to this my last, my earnest and most affectionate advice: Continue inflexible in your adherence to the purity of the Christian faith, and let no artifices of your seducing teachers, nor any consideration whatever, alienate your minds from the doctrine, the spirit, the practice, and the hope of the gospel.

¹ *Wherefore, &c.*] This verse should not have been separated from the preceding chapter, from which it is the proper inference. See 1 Cor. xv. 58.

² *Thus stand firmly, &c.*] implying a commendation of their steadfastness hitherto, as well as an exhortation to perseverance. Stand fast in the Lord, *i. e.* be steadfast Christians. See ch. i. 5, 6, 28, 29, ii. 11—16, iii. 17. “*thus, q. d.* as I have exhorted you, follow this my example.” Peirce.

³ *My beloved.*] “Remarkable (says Peirce) is the number of words he here uses, as though he thought he never could apply words enough to express the greatness of his love and tenderness for them.”

SECTION VI.

THE APOSTLE offers seasonable advices and exhortations to some distinguished individuals; he repeats his thanks to the Philippians for their liberality, and particularly for their last present, and concludes the epistle with a suitable doxology, a general salutation, and the usual benediction. Ch. iv. 2—23. Ch. IV.

1. The apostle gently hints some seasonable advice to some respectable members of the church at Philippi, ver. 2, 3.

I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche⁴, that they be of one mind in the Lord. Yea, I intreat thee also, true companion⁵, assist these women, for they have earnestly laboured in the gospel with me, and with Clement⁶, and with my other fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life⁷. Ver. 2.
3.

⁴ *Euodia and Syntyche.*] These were, no doubt, two women of respectable character in the church at Philippi. The apostle's exhortation supposes the existence of some difference, but whether with each other, or with the church in general, does not appear from the epistle. As the exhortation immediately succeeds the warning against false teachers, and these pious women appear, ver. 3, to have been very active in assisting the teachers of Christianity, it seems not improbable that they had been misled by the affected zeal of the judaizing teachers, and that the apostle's design was to recover them to the purity of the faith. This thought is hinted at in Mr. Peirce's note. Dr. Whitby thinks, that as persons cannot change their minds by intreaty or exhortation, the apostle exhorts them to promote the gospel with one soul.

⁵ *True companion.*] So Newcome. γνησιε συζυγε, true yoke-fellow; metaphorically, every one who is in any way united to, or associated with another. See Schleusner. Some of the ancients imagined that the apostle is here addressing his own wife, whom he is supposed to have left at Philippi. Clemens Alex. Strom. ii. p. 448. Euseb. E. H. iii. 30. It is objected that γνησιε is in the masculine gender. But this, Erasmus observes, is not an unusual Atticism, and if it was a real objection, it must have occurred as such to the ancient Greek ecclesiastical writers. It is, however, generally understood from 1 Cor. vii. 7, 8, that the apostle was either unmarried or a widower; and most modern interpreters suppose that the apostle here addresses some eminent fellow-labourer in the gospel. Grotius and others think that he apostrophizes Epaphroditus; but this distinguished teacher was not then at Philippi; and the apostle never uses the expression συζυγος in this sense, but συνεργος. "It is uncertain what eminent person in the church of Philippi is here meant." Newcome. Perhaps the most probable supposition may be that of Chrysostom, and some ancient Greek commentators, (see Clarius's note, and Peirce in loc.,) that the person here addressed was the husband or brother of one of these women. It may be observed, that a difficulty of this kind, which is inexplicable to a commentator, could not occur to those to whom the letter was written, who would at once know the persons and circumstances to which the apostle alluded. This is an inconvenience unavoidably attached to epistolary writing; and the occurrence of such obscure allusions is a presumption in favour of the genuineness of the epistle, which a forger would hardly give himself the trouble to invent.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 3.

Having thus warned you of the danger you are in of being misled by false and interested teachers, I must now take leave to suggest a hint of friendly and Christian advice to two eminently pious women, who are, I fear, in some hazard of being warped from the simplicity of the faith. I earnestly beseech, therefore, and I seriously exhort those venerable matrons, Euodia and Syntyche, that they continue in unison with the church of Christ, and that they do not suffer themselves to be seduced from the pure doctrine of the gospel. And you, my dear brother, the faithful partner of one of these excellent women, assist their weakness, and teach them how to repel the artful attacks of the enemies of Christian faith and liberty. I am anxious on their account, because they were once zealous advocates for truth, and in their proper province they afforded great assistance to myself, and to Clement, and to other teachers of the gospel who have laboured among them at different times, who are not only professing but practical believers, and useful ministers: and whose names are entered in the registers of that holy community the members of which are entitled by the promise of God to immortal life and happiness.

2. The apostle recommends cheerfulness, meekness, prayer, and thankfulness, ver. 4—7.

4. *Rejoice in the Lord. Again I say, always rejoice*¹.

My friends, in the midst of your difficulties and trials I call upon you to rejoice. Rejoice in your Christian profession, your Christian privileges, and your Christian hopes; I have given you this advice before; I now repeat it again. Rejoice continually. None have so much reason to rejoice as the sincere and enlightened believer in Christ. Let not any sophistry of error, nor any outward afflictions or persecutions, rob you of your invaluable treasure, or interrupt your sacred delight.

5. *Let your mildness*² *be known to all men. The Lord is near*³.

⁶ *Clement*] is supposed to be the person who was afterwards Bishop of Rome, who wrote an epistle to the Corinthians which is still extant.

⁷ *Whose names, &c.*] This is an allusion to a public register of the names of persons who are entitled to the privileges and immunities of a corporation or society. It occurs repeatedly both in the Old Testament and the New. See Exod. xxxii. 32; Isa. iv. 3; Luke x. 20; Heb. xii. 33; Rev. xiii. 8, xxi. 27, xxii. 19; Mal. iii. 16. The apostle does not pretend to any revelation upon this subject; but, knowing the character and zeal of his fellow-labourers, he expresses his firm expectation of their future reward.

¹ *Again I say, always rejoice.*] This punctuation is recommended by Bengelius, "that the sentence may rise stronger after the word *again*, agreeably to the apostle's usual manner, Gal. i. 8, v. 2, 3." Bowyer. See ch. iii. 1.

You suffer in one shape or another for your adherence to Christian truth. Ch. VI.
Ver. 5.
Let not the injustice nor the severity of your sufferings betray you into any acrimonious expressions, and still less into any acts of retaliation for injuries received. Let your meekness and forbearance to your enemies and persecutors be conspicuous to all. It will make a favourable impression. At all events, remember that Jesus is near; that the hour is approaching when your beloved and honoured Lord will appear in his glory to animadvert with just severity upon his enemies and yours; and to give his faithful followers the crown of life. Leave it to him to redress your wrongs, and look to him for the promised reward.

Be anxious about nothing; but upon every occasion, by prayer and supplication⁴, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And that peace of God⁵ which exceedeth all comprehension, will safely guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. 6.
7.

In the mean time, let not your minds be distracted by corroding care, or by any distressing apprehensions of what may happen to you in your passage through this world. Confide in God, and keep close to him in the exercises of devotion. Pray to him for what you want, deprecate what you

² *Mildness.*] το επιεικες. "The word denotes a disposition to clemency, lenity, and forgiveness." Newcome.

³ *The Lord is near.*] This is generally understood of Christ's coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, but that would be little to the apostle's purpose. It seems more probable that the apostles expected the appearance of Christ to judge the world before the generation then existing was extinct. To them it was not given to know the times and the seasons, Acts i. 7.

⁴ *Supplication.*] Dr. Macknight renders the word δεησεις, "deprecation of what is evil."

⁵ *Peace of God will guard, &c.*] This expression occurs only in this place and Col. iii. 15; it probably signifies that state of peace and friendship with God into which they were introduced by the Christian religion, which, by enlightening their understandings and encouraging their hearts, would keep them firm in their adherence to the gospel. Newcome renders the phrase, "peace with God." The Vulgate and Italic versions read *custodiat*, which Mr. Wakefield adopts. *q. d. May that peace of God, &c.* The Alexandrine manuscript and the Syriac version read, "the peace of Christ;" and in the parallel passage in the Epistle to the Colossians, this reading is so well supported, that Griesbach introduces it into his text. The sense is the same; that happy state into which the mind is brought by practical faith in the gospel of Christ, and reliance upon its promises.

Mr. Peirce observes, that "St. Paul is here arming the Philippians against persecution; nor could any thing be a greater support to them under it than the peace we have with God; for the sense of it will make the heaviest afflictions and pressures sit easy upon us. I grant a peaceable and quiet temper (which is the sense in which some understand the words) will be a support and comfort to a man under his troubles, when he considers that he has done nothing to provoke men, and that their fury and wrath against him is without cause. But this is inconsiderable in comparison with the support we shall have from a sense of God's favour and his being at peace with us. And the commendation here given to the peace of God, that it passeth all understanding, seems to suit better with this sense than the other." "Peace signifies happiness; and the 'peace of God' may signify 'great happiness', or, 'such peace or happiness as God alone can bestow.'" Dr. Priestley.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 7.

fear, and be thankful for what you possess. While you thus offer up the tribute of gratitude and of piety, you may cheerfully hope for a divine blessing. And in particular, that happy state of reconciliation with God into which you are introduced by faith in Jesus Christ, will soothe your troubled spirits into tranquillity and peace. That exquisite delight which arises from a humble hope in the divine mercy, and which none but those who experience it can comprehend, is the best and surest refuge to the bewildered understanding, and to the aching and foreboding heart.

3. The apostle enjoins the practice of all virtue, and proposes to their imitation his own example, ver. 8, 9.

8. *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true¹, whatsoever things are venerable², whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are kind³, whatsoever things are reputable⁴; if there be any*
9. *virtue, if there be any praise⁵, attentively consider these things⁶. And the things which ye have learned⁷, and admitted, and heard, and seen in me, these practise, and the God of peace⁸ will be with you.*

¹ True.] “*rectum, honestum ut verum apud Latinos; ‘Quid verum atque decens. Hor.’* Rosenmuller.

² Venerable.] *σεμνα*, “grave, or honourable.” See Newcome. Mr. Wakefield renders the word *respectable*, “which,” he observes, “has not a sufficiently ancient cast, but so exactly represents the original as to deserve the preference to every other.” “*honestum, decorum, quicquid est viro gravi et honesto dignum.*” Rosenmuller.

³ Kind.] “*προσφιλη, quæ benigna sunt et gratiosum faciunt hominem.*” Grotius. “*amabilia.*” Rosenmuller.

⁴ Whatsoever things are reputable.] “*εὐφήμα, quæ bonam famam pariunt.*” Rosenmuller.

⁵ If there be any virtue, &c.] “If there be any other virtuous or praiseworthy action. Praise is used for what is the cause of praise.” Newcome. Some copies after *επαινος*, read *επιστημης*, “praise of knowledge;” and the Vulgate and some other versions read *disciplinæ*, which reading Peirce prefers, though he admits that the common reading amounts to the same thing. “*Si quæ res est, quæ in censu virtutum apud cordatos venit. επαινος, meton. quicquid est laude dignum.*” Rosenmuller.

⁶ Attentively consider.] So Macknight. “*ταυτα λογισθε, hoc animo recolite, nempe ideo, ut et in actionem producat.*” Rosenmuller.

⁷ Which ye have learned.] “which ye have learned from me, and received as the will of God, and have heard that I practise, and seen me do.” Macknight. “It is happy when the preachers of the gospel can thus propose their own example for the imitation of their hearers; and certainly none ought to preach the gospel but those who, besides understanding the principles of it, can likewise recommend and enforce it by their own conduct.” Dr. Priestley.

⁸ The God of peace:] i. e. God the giver of peace. Mr. Peirce observes, that “this title is several times used by St. Paul when he is discoursing of Christians being peaceable as very proper to encourage them to mind the things which make for peace;” but he adds, “that he may as well be called the God of peace, upon account of his affording us peace with himself. See Heb. xiii. 20, 1 Thess. v. 23.”

Dr. Priestley observes, that “the apostle concludes his epistle with mentioning particular circumstances relating to himself and the persons to whom he wrote, and with salutations from and to particular persons; all which are most unequivocal marks of the genuineness of the

Ch. IV.
Ver. 9.

And now, my beloved brethren and fellow-Christians, I shall in a few words sum up what remains to be added by way of exhortation. Maintain an invariable regard to truth. Let your words uniformly correspond with your real sentiments, and your actions with your promises. Let your conduct be grave and dignified, worthy of your honourable profession and your exalted expectations. In your intercourse with others, be solicitous to give every one his due, and so insist upon your own rights as not to infringe upon the rights of others. Preserve the purity of your mind unsullied; and resolutely abstain from all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions. Be courteous and kind to all, and let beneficence in conduct flow from benevolence of heart. Behave at all times with that prudent circumspection and strict propriety which will ensure the approbation of the wise and good, and will defeat the malice of those who may wish to calumniate your character and profession. In a word, whatever may with truth be denominated virtuous and praiseworthy, let this be the object of your serious attention; and when you have formed your judgement, act accordingly.

Upon these topics it is unnecessary for me to enlarge at present. When I preached the gospel to you at first, I fairly stated the whole of its requisitions. You learned them from me; you admitted their obligation: you saw them exemplified in my conduct. I can appeal to you, that my character was uniformly consistent with my doctrine. As, then, you have received my doctrine, I beseech you to follow my example. Live in habitual subjection to the laws of Christ; and God, the Author of peace, who sent his son into the world, to proclaim and to seal the message of reconciliation and mercy, this God will be with you to preserve and bless you, to ensure peace here, and everlasting happiness hereafter.

4. The apostle expresses the great satisfaction which he felt on account of the generous spirit of the Philippians, and that still more for their sakes than for his own, ver. 10—14.

But I rejoiced in the Lord⁹ greatly, that now, at last, your concern for

10.

epistle. Indeed there are no epistles remaining from all antiquity which bear such indisputable marks of genuineness as these of Paul: and, as I have observed, the genuineness of these epistles sufficiently proves the truth of Christianity. For it is impossible to account for the writing of such epistles as these, without admitting the reality of the principal facts on which the truth of Christianity depends; and these epistles were written prior to any of the gospels."

⁹ *Rejoiced in the Lord:] i. e. as a believer in Christ I was pleased to see the efficacy of*

Ch. IV. *me hath revived*¹, *with regard to which ye were indeed concerned before*²,
Ver. 10. *but ye wanted opportunity*³.

As a faithful missionary of the benevolent religion of Jesus, and solicitous for the prevalence both of its knowledge and its power, I am highly gratified with the late seasonable exertion of your bounty towards me, which cheered me like the return of spring after a dreary winter. Indeed I well know that there has been no interruption of your kind inclinations towards me, though circumstances have for a long time precluded me from deriving the benefit which you were desirous to communicate.

11. *Nor do I speak on account of want*⁴, *for I have learned in whatsoever circumstances I am, to be content.*

I assure you that my joy does not merely, or principally, arise from the ample supply of my wants, though I am far from being insensible of your kindness in this respect, or from any unbecoming contempt of the blessings of life; but acting always under a sense of duty in the discharge of my important mission, I have made up my mind to be satisfied with every change of condition which the providence of God may see fit to assign me.

12. *I both know what it is*⁵ *to be brought low, and I know what it is to*

Christian principles in the generosity of your conduct. See ch. iii. 1, iv. 4. "He uses (says Mr. Peirce) a very skilful way of commending the generosity of his benefactors; wherein he signifies, not only that they had done their duty, but that the Lord had favoured them by stirring them up to it; and that they had given him occasion of much thankfulness to the Lord: which shows his pious disposition who in such things took special notice of the Lord's hand and kindness to him." "It is observable," says Dr. Priestley, "that the apostle thanks God for their generosity to him. Men are only the instruments in the hands of providence. The first and proper cause of all good is God. But I would observe also, that God works only by second causes, and not immediately, for that would be by miracles, which we are not now authorized to expect."

¹ *Your concern, &c.*] Literally, *that you have revived, or flourished again, as to your concern for me.* It is a metaphor, borrowed from the revival of vegetables in the spring. "Like vegetables (says Dr. Doddridge), which, after having seemed during the winter to be dead in the earth, sprout up at the returning spring with new beauty."

² *With regard to which, &c.*] ἐφ' ᾧ i. e. πραγμάτων. "in which matter ye were careful." Peirce. Mr. Wakefield's translation is, "which indeed ye entertained before." "I know you would have done it sooner, had not my great distance from you prevented it." Pyle. "Qua de re tamen solliciti eratis, ut Beza vertit. Hoc autem Paulus addit, ut mitiget, quod dixerat, ipsorum studium revivuisse. ἐφ' ᾧ, h. e. περὶ τῆς καλῶς. Καὶ, pro, μὲντοι." Rosenmuller.

³ *Ye wanted opportunity.*] ἡκαίρεισθε δε, or, "ye wanted ability." Peirce approves this translation, because Chrysostom says that the word was commonly used in this sense. They wanted ability, not because of their poverty, but from the want of means and opportunities of conveyance.

⁴ *Nor do I speak, &c.*] "Neque, κατὰ, propter inopiam dico." Castellio. "Non ideo hoc dico, quod in penuria constitutus fuerim, vel magna penuria laboraverim. Sapiens enim, ut statim aliis verbis addit Paulus, tenui etiam sorte est contentus, nec multis eget." Rosenmuller.

⁵ *What it is, &c.*] See Wakefield.

abound; in every season and in all conditions I am instructed⁶ both to be fed plentifully and to suffer hunger, both to abound and to be in want. I am sufficient for all things through him who strengtheneth me⁷. Nevertheless, ye have done right in jointly contributing⁸ to the relief of my distress.

Ch. IV.

Ver. 12.

13, 14.

In the various scenes through which I have been conducted in the course of my ministry, I have experienced all the vicissitudes of external condition. I have experienced what it is to be poor, and what it is to be rich; I have been initiated into the great mystery of accommodating myself to all situations, to every change of time and circumstance, to live in abundance, or to be in want of the necessities of life, to be supplied with every thing, or to be destitute of all things. And in every state I can be cheerful and satisfied; for God, who has invested me with my apostolical office, supports me in it, and enables me zealously to perform all the duties and cheerfully to endure all the trials with which I am exercised in the discharge of my mission. Nevertheless, I am not above accepting the kindness of my friends; and it is much to the credit of your character, that you have made so large a contribution towards the alleviation of those difficulties in which you knew that I was involved.

5. The apostle gratefully acknowledges the repeated and peculiar obligations that he was under to the generosity of the Philippians; and expresses his earnest prayer and hope that God would abundantly reward them for all their kindness to him: concluding with a suitable doxology, ver. 15—20.

And indeed, O ye Philippians, ye yourselves know that at the beginning of the gospel, when I was departed from Macedonia⁹, no church had

15.

⁶ *I am instructed.*] “μεμυημαι, μυω, proprie initio aliquem sacris et mysteriis.” Schleusner. *q. d.* it has been a part of the discipline in which I have been initiated to instruct me how to conduct myself with propriety in all circumstances and upon all occasions. “Initiatus sum: i. e. institutus. Hesychius interpretatur πεπειραμαι, expertus didici. εν παντι sc. χρονω vel τοπω, et εν πασι sc. χρημασι, in omnibus rebus vel negotiis.” Rosenmuller. “always and in all things I am instructed.” Newcome. “in every place and among all men.” Peirce. I have adopted Wakefield’s version.

⁷ *Him who strengtheneth me.*] Χριστω, Christ, which is the reading of the received text, is wanting in the Alexandrine and Clermont copies, in the Coptic, Æthiopic, and Vulgate versions, and is omitted in Griesbach’s edition, and in Archbishop Newcome’s translation.

⁸ *Jointly contributing.*] So Wakefield, Macknight, and Newcome. “My contentment in my circumstances does not at all lessen the commendableness of your behaviour, who have done well in commiserating and supplying me.” Peirce.

⁹ *At the beginning of the gospel, when I was departed from Macedonia.*] οτε εξηλθον απο

Ch. IV. *intercourse with me as concerning giving and receiving*¹, *but ye only.*
 Ver. 16. *And that even in Thessalonica*² *more than once*³ *ye sent relief to my necessity.*

I remember with gratitude your oft experienced kindness. I need not remind you, my dear Philippian friends, how repeatedly you have attended to and relieved my wants, and have been ready unasked to impart your welcome bounty; when other churches, equally indebted to my apostolical labours, either did not consider my necessities, or were unable to supply them, or from peculiar circumstances were prevented from gratifying their generous inclinations. And in particular, when I first preached the gospel in Achaia after I had left Macedonia, and when for special reasons I absolutely refused accepting any remuneration at Corinth, you, and you alone of all the churches which I had established, sent me a supply; which enabled me to preach the gospel at free-cost to the Corinthians. Nor can I ever forget, that before I left Macedonia, and while I was preaching and suffering at Thessalonica, you repeatedly sent a seasonable relief to my necessities.

κ.τ.λ. Dr. Paley, in his excellent *Horæ Paulinæ*, p. 265, mentions the coincidences of the facts here alluded to, with other passages in the New Testament, as remarkable illustrations of his argument for the genuineness of the epistles. *At the beginning of the gospel: q. d.* when the gospel was first preached in Macedonia. An indication that it had been preached there more than once at the time when the apostle wrote; and that the event alluded to had happened after the first visit: a fact confirmed by the history, Acts xvi. xx. The liberality of the Philippians occurred first, soon after he had quitted Macedonia: *Ye know (ὅτι) that when I was departed*—for so he renders ἐξηλθόν, comp. Luke ii. 15, Matt. xii. 43, John xiii. 30, Acts x. 7,—*from Macedonia no church communicated with me, but ye only; και ὅτι, and ye know that in Thessalonica ye sent, &c.* Now it appears from 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9, that the Macedonians, i. e. the Philippians, sent relief to him at Corinth in Achaia, i. e. after he had left Macedonia, besides the supplies which they repeatedly remitted to him at Thessalonica. So that the apostle here alludes to two distinct remittances, or rather donations, at two distinct periods; one at Corinth soon after he had left Macedonia, the other at Thessalonica: which facts coincide with the history and the epistle in a way which plainly proves that the coincidence was undesigned, and consequently that the epistle could not have been forged.

¹ *As concerning giving and receiving.*] εἰς λόγον. “No church communicated with me in a single instance of giving and receiving.” Wakefield.

² *In Thessalonica.*] “a city so much larger and richer than your own.” Peirce and Newcome. But it is not probable that the apostle intended to cast any reflection upon the liberality of the Thessalonians, for whom he expresses so much affection in his epistles to them. Possibly there might be the same reason for declining to accept a maintenance from them as from the Corinthians, and he chose rather to maintain himself by his own industry, and to derive the assistance he wanted from the Philippians, than to give his malignant enemies and persecutors a pretence to say that he was influenced by mean and sinister motives. 1 Thess. ii. 5, 6, 9; 2 Thess. iii. 7, 8, 9.

³ *More than once.*] ἀπαξ και δις, sæpius. Grotius.

Not that I desire another gift⁴, but I rather desire fruit which may abound to your account. For I have every thing⁵, and abound; I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent by you, a fragrant odour, an acceptable sacrifice⁶, well pleasing to God.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 17.
18.

Do not imagine, my brethren, that I remind you of these your former kindnesses, in order to trespass further upon your generosity at present: far from it. I mean no more than to encourage that liberal spirit, by the exercise of which upon every proper occasion you may be daily adding to your future reward. As to myself, I am quite at ease, in the enjoyment of abundance, since I received your bountiful present by Epaphroditus; which, as it was a most seasonable and acceptable supply to me, so as proceeding on your part from motives of piety and gratitude, it is an oblation more pleasing to God, whose servant and messenger I am, than a sacrifice of the sweetest perfume, and will in due time be acknowledged and rewarded by him as such.

Now may my God⁷, according to his glorious riches⁸, supply all your wants by Christ Jesus. And to our God and Father⁹ be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

19.

20.

⁴ *Desire another gift.*] επιζητω. *I further desire.* Newcome. "Not that I wish for a gift so much as I wish for that fruit," &c. Wakefield.

⁵ *I have every thing.*] "απεχω, rectè omnia accepi." Grotius. Matt. vi. 2. But Peirce prefers the common translation; as he afterwards mentions his having received their present by Epaphroditus.

⁶ *An acceptable sacrifice.*] "We see how familiar to the Jews," says Dr. Priestley, "were the rites of their religion, and how they supplied them with a constant source of figures of speech. If a present of money was called a *sacrifice well pleasing to God*, can we be surprised that so heroical an act of virtue as that which Christ manifested in his death should also be called a *sacrifice well pleasing to God*? How then can we be authorized from such phrases as these to suppose that the death of Christ was a sacrifice in any other sense than that in which this contribution of the Christians at Philippi to Paul was called a sacrifice; or, than prayer, or any other part of our duty, may be called a sacrifice? and yet the death of Christ has been considered so much a sacrifice, as by this means alone the anger of God against sin has been appeased, and that by this means only he has become propitious to offending sinners."

⁷ *May my God.*] πληρωσαι. This is the reading of the Clermont and other manuscripts, and the Vulgate and Italic versions, is noted by Griesbach as deserving of respect, and is approved by Peirce. The common reading is πληρωσει, my God will supply.

⁸ *Glorious riches.*] Put εν δοξη between commas. Not, "in glory by Christ Jesus;" but, "he shall supply your need with glory, according to his riches in Christ Jesus." Castellio, Bowyer. "May my God gloriously supply all your need, according to his riches, or, as he is abundantly able to do it." Peirce. "εν δοξη referendum ad πληρωσαι, gloriosè, i. e. largissimè." Rosenmuller.

⁹ *To our God and Father.*] "Here again I would observe," says Dr. Priestley, "what is conspicuous through all the New Testament, that *God* and *the Father* are synonymous terms, neither Christ nor any other person being so much as called God; and that to the Father alone is glory in the highest sense ascribed, he being the author of all good, and Christ his minister or servant in communicating blessings to mankind."

Ch. IV.
Ver. 20.

The only return I can make for all your kindness is by good wishes and prayers in your behalf. Of these be assured you have no common share. May that God, whose messenger I am, whose service I perform, in whose protection and favour I rejoice, and in whose great mercy I humbly confide, reward your generosity with a rich abundance of the glorious blessings of the gospel of Jesus; with peace, and joy, and everlasting life. To this great and venerable Being, who condescends to acknowledge the endearing character of a Father to all the true disciples of Jesus Christ, be ascribed by us, and by all his faithful servants, glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

CONCLUSION.

THE APOSTLE in a postscript adds a general salutation and the customary benediction, ver. 21—23.

21. *Salute every holy believer in Christ Jesus*¹. *The brethren*² who are
22. *with me salute you. All the saints*³ *salute you; particularly those of*
23. *Cesar's household*⁴. *The favour of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit*⁵. *Amen.*

I cannot close this epistle without sending my affectionate salutations to every individual member of your Christian society. All are entitled to my

¹ *Holy believer in, &c.*] “every one that is holy through Christ Jesus.” Newcome. It is the apostle’s circumlocution for *Christian*: a term which he always avoids.

² *Brethren.*] These, being distinguished from the saints, probably signify the ministers of the gospel who were the apostle’s coadjutors.

³ *Saints:*] or, “holy men;” as ver. 21. “By *saints* in this place,” says Dr. Priestley, “we are not to understand what was meant by that term in after ages, persons of greater sanctity than others: and least of all persons abstracted from the world and from the duties of it, but simply Christians, persons professing Christianity, and thereby constituting the church and people of God, as the Jews had been before, who were called a holy and peculiar people, as standing in a nearer relation to God than other nations.”

⁴ *Cesar’s household.*] “Raphelius, Kypke, and Krebsius, show that the phrase may signify *non solum domesticos, sive aulicos sive liberos, Neronis, sed cognatos ejusdem.*” Newcome.—Dr. Macknight conjectures that the apostle may have been favourably regarded even by Poppea the emperor’s wife; for Josephus, who was acquainted with her character, says she was a worshiper of the true God. *Antiq. lib. xx. c. 7.* Dr. John Jones has taken much pains to show that Epaphroditus, the freedman of Nero, and that Seneca, were both Christians. *Jones’s Series of Important Facts demonstrating the Truth of the Christian Religion*, ch. iv.

⁵ *Your spirit.*] *μετα τῆς πνεύματος ὑμῶν*, i. e. with you. This is the reading of some of the best manuscripts, and of many ancient versions: see Griesbach.

best regards ; and I name none, that I may not appear to give preference to any. My respected colleagues in the honourable office of preaching the gospel send their salutations to you. All the members of the congregation of believers at Rome are solicitous to testify their affectionate regard to you. Amongst these are some whom perhaps you would little expect, some who live within the precincts of the court, who are even members of the imperial family : these in particular desire me to testify their high sense of your meritorious conduct. Finally, may all the invaluable blessings of the everlasting gospel, which is the free gift of God by Jesus Christ, be with you and yours ! Amen. ⁶

Ch. IV.
Ver. 23.

⁶ The postscript, that " the Epistle to the Philippians was written from Rome by Epaphroditus," is correct. Dr. Macknight concludes his Notes with the observation, that " though the apostle has not mentioned it in his Letters, we may believe that not long after this epistle was written, he obtained a fair hearing and an honourable release, through the good offices of the Christians in Nero's family, as well as on account of the justice of his cause."

best regards; and I have no doubt that I may not appear to give preference to any of my respected colleagues in the honorable office of preaching the gospel and that I shall be able to testify their affectionate regard to you. Amongst these are some whom perhaps you would little expect, some who have within the past few years been members of the imperial family, these in particular desire me to testify their high sense of your noble mission conduct. Finally, may all the invaluable blessings of the everlasting gospel be yours, and may you be able to testify to the great work of God in your hearts.

TO

"The publisher, that 'the Epistle to the Philippians was written from Rome by Paul and Timothy, in the latter part of the first century of the Christian era, and that the apostle has not only written it, but also dictated it, and that the good office of the Epistle is to be a faithful record of the history of the church, as well as an account of the history of the church.'"

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

COLOSSA was a considerable city of Phrygia Major in the Lesser Asia upon the river Lycus, at no great distance from Hierapolis, and Laodicea, which was the largest and the most opulent of the three, and the metropolis of that district. It is debated whether the apostle Paul planted the gospel in these cities, and even whether he had ever visited them in person. It seems, indeed, highly improbable, when the historian relates, Acts xvi. 6, that "Paul and Silas went through Phrygia and Galatia," and Acts xviii. 23, that the apostle "went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order," that he should have declined to visit the principal cities in that region. It is, however, possible that for reasons not now apparent, Paul and Silas might have been warned to decline visiting these cities, as they had been forbidden to preach the gospel in Mysia, or to enter into Bithynia, Acts xvi. 7. And

It is also possible that the apostle in his missionary circuit might have passed through these cities, and even stopped a few days without any material occurrence worthy of record. It is plain, that in the record of these journeys the apostle was anxious to get on to Ephesus, and of course would not make a long stay at any of the places through which he passed.

THE EPISTLE
OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
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¹ It is also possible that the apostle in his missionary circuits might have passed through these cities, and even stopped a few days without any material occurrence worthy of record. It is plain, that in the second of these journeys the apostle was anxious to get on to Ephesus, and of course would not make a long stay at any of the places through which he passed.

it has generally been inferred from the apostle's expressions Col. ii. 1, "I would that ye should know what earnest care I have for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh," that he had never visited these cities in person. And though Theodoret¹, a writer of the fifth century, has explained these words as though he had said, "not only for you, but for others who have never seen me." Dr. Whitby justly observes, "that the structure of the sentence is inconsistent with such an interpretation²."

It is also remarked, that (Col. i. 3) the apostle gives thanks to God for them since he had *heard* of their faith in Christ Jesus; whereas, when writing to the churches which he had himself planted or visited, he saith to the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. i. 3, "We give thanks to God, *remembering*, without ceasing, your work of faith;" and to the Philippians, ch. i. 3, "I thank my God upon every *remembrance* of you."

But the fact which principally decides the question is, That whereas, in the epistles addressed to churches which the apostle is known to have planted or visited, in those to the Thessalonians, to the Corinthians, to the Galatians and the Philippians, he is continually making allusions to circumstances which occurred while he was with them, to his conduct among them, or to their behaviour to him: in the epistle to the Colossians, as well as in that to the Ephesians, there is not a single allusion of this nature, there is not a sentence, or a word, which would lead any one to conclude that Paul had ever been at Colossæ, or that he had ever seen an individual of those to whom the epistle was inscribed.

Lardner has taken great pains to establish the fact that Paul had planted, or at least visited, the church at Colossæ; but Paley thinks that he has not been successful in his argument. On the other hand, it is admitted that the majority of the ancient ecclesiastical writers, with the exception of Theodoret, and a few others, believed that the apostle was a stranger to the Colossians; and this opinion is adopted by Whitby, Peirce, Doddridge, Rosenmuller, and Paley.

¹ "Some are of opinion, says Theodoret, tom. iii. p. 342, that when the divine apostle wrote this epistle he had not seen the Colossians; and they endeavour to support their opinion by these words Col. ii. 1. But they should consider that the meaning of the words is this, 'I have not only a concern for *you*, but I have also a great concern for those who have not seen me.'" Lardner's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 457.

² Whitby says, "That St. Paul wrote this epistle to the Colossians when he had not yet seen them, is the opinion of most of the ancient scholiasts. This is confessed even by Theodoret, though he saith this does not follow from the words cited to confirm this opinion, but the contrary." And upon Theodoret's interpretation Dr. Whitby observes, "that the connecting particle being, not *αλλα*, or *αλλα και*, but *also*, but only *και*, and, seems to favour our translation and the opinion of the ancients."

It becomes, therefore, a question when and by whom was the gospel first preached at Colossæ³. And it is generally agreed that the Christian doctrine was planted there during the residence of Paul at Ephesus, where he passed three years. It is stated Acts xix. 9, 10, that "Paul discoursed daily in the school of one Tyrannus; and this was done for two years, so that all those who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Gentiles." At this period, no doubt, some of the inhabitants of Colossæ would have an opportunity of listening to the instructions of the apostle, and would be converted to the faith, and that they would carry the gospel home to their countrymen. Among these probably were Epaphras, Philemon, Archippus, and others.

The EPISTLE to the COLOSSIANS is one of those the genuineness of which has never been called in question⁴. It professes to have been written by the apostle Paul: it contains nothing inconsistent with this supposition, nothing incongruous to the apostle's character and circumstances, to his doctrine, his style, and manner of thinking; or to the age in which he lived, and the relative situation of the writer and of those to whom his epistle is inscribed: and its authenticity is confirmed by various incidental coincidences with Luke's History and the other epistles, which are noticed by Archdeacon Paley. It was universally received by the primitive church; was early translated into different languages; copies of it were multiplied and widely diffused: it has been cited from age to age, invariably, as the production of the apostle's pen; and the copies which are now extant in all parts of the world, whether in the original language, or in versions ancient or modern, harmonize with each other, with very few, and those immaterial, variations.

³ "It is uncertain by whom a Christian church was planted at Colossæ. It seems probable that it was not by Paul himself. Nor is it certain that the Colossians were converted to the Christian faith by any whom St. Paul sent to them. This, indeed, seems probable; for he had spent three years at Ephesus, Acts xx. 31, and it is not unlikely that during that time some of the Colossians having occasion to go to Ephesus, might by him be turned to Christianity, and might when they went home be employed by him to preach the gospel to their fellow-citizens. This may be thought the more probable from what Luke says of his success when he had been at Ephesus but two years, Acts xix. 10. Epaphras may well be supposed to be one of this number. He was himself a Colossian, chap. iv. 12, a faithful minister of Christ for them, chap. i. 7, by whom he intimates they had been chiefly instructed. And possibly they therefore sent him as their minister to St. Paul." Peirce.

⁴ The late learned and pious Edward Evanson is the single exception to this assertion, and his objection is founded upon the supposed inconsistency between the language of the epistle, which implies that he had never personally visited Colossæ, and the declaration of Luke that he had passed through Galatia and Phrygia in order. Evanson's *Dissonance of the Evangelists*, p. 313.

This epistle was written by the apostle from Rome, at the latter end of the year 62, or the beginning of the year 63, at the same time with the epistle to the Ephesians, with which it remarkably harmonizes both in matter and style, as is distinctly and beautifully illustrated by Paley¹; and it was sent to Colossæ by the same messengers, Tychicus and Onesimus, who conveyed the Epistle to the Ephesians, or Laodiceans. Compare Eph. vi. 21, 22 with Col. iv. 7, 8.

Grotius introduces his Annotations upon the Epistle to the Colossians with observing: "All the Epistles of Paul are excellent; but chiefly those which are written from Rome by Paul the prisoner²."

The great design of this Epistle appears to be, to confirm the Colossians in the true faith of the gospel, to excite their admiration and gratitude at the

¹ "Both epistles," says Paley, p. 209, "represent the writer as under imprisonment for the gospel, and both treat of the same general subject. The epistle, therefore, to the Ephesians, and the epistle to the Colossians, import to be two letters written by the same person, nearly at the same time, and upon the same subject, and to have been sent by the same messenger. Now every thing in the sentiments, order, and diction of the two writings, corresponds with what might be expected from this circumstance of identity or cognation in their original. The leading doctrine of both epistles is the union of Jews and Gentiles under the Christian dispensation; and that doctrine in both is established by the same argument, or, more properly, illustrated by the same similitudes: 'one head,' 'one body,' 'one new man,' 'one temple,' are, in both epistles, the figures under which the society of believers in Christ, and their common relation to him as such, are represented. The ancient, and, as had been thought, the indelible distinction between Jew and Gentile, in both epistles is declared to be now abolished by the cross. Beside this consent in the general tenor of the two epistles, and in the run also, and warmth of thought with which they are composed, we may naturally expect in letters produced under the circumstances in which these appear to have been written, a closer resemblance of style and diction than between other letters of the same person, but of distant dates, or between letters adapted to different occasions. In particular we may look for many of the same expressions, and sometimes for whole sentences being alike, since such expressions and sentences would be repeated in the second letter (whichever that was), as yet fresh in the author's mind from the writing of the first. Compare Eph. i. 7, 10 with Col. i. 14, 20; Eph. iii. 2 with Col. i. 25. Sometimes the order of the principal words is inadvertently changed; and in many instances not single words, nor whole sentences, but parts and fragments of sentences are repeated. Eph. i. 19, ii. 5, compared with Col. ii. 12, 13; Eph. iv. 2—4 with Col. iii. 12—15."

² "*Omnes epistolæ Pauli egregiæ sunt; sed omnium imprimis quæ Romæ ex vinculis missæ sunt. Harum primam temporis ordine arbitror fuisse illam ad Philemonem: nam tunc adhuc cum ipso erat Epaphroditus qui et Epaphras. Alteram ad Philippenses, ubi Epaphroditum remittit. Tertiam, ad Ephesios, et eodem prope tempore hanc ad Colossenses cum adhuc quæ ad Ephesios scripserat in animo hærerent. Postrema vero omnium ea quæ posterior est ad Timotheum. Erant Colossæ urbs Phrygiæ, memorata et Herodoto, et Xenophonti, et Straboni, et Plinio, non longe a Laodicea: quæ urbes ambæ non multo post scriptam hanc epistolam terræ motu corruere. Ideo apud Ptolemæum non reperiuntur.*" Grotius.

That this learned critic was mistaken in his method of arranging the epistles from Rome is highly probable, as has been, or will hereafter be, shown. Nor is it certain that Epaphras was the same with Epaphroditus; for though the name might be the same, Epaphroditus, as Beausobre observes, was sent to Philippi, while Epaphras was detained a prisoner at Rome. Philemon ver. 23.

goodness of God in inviting the Gentiles into the church; to warn them against the delusions of Jewish bigotry and heathen philosophy; and to exhort them to the cultivation of that spirit and the practice of those duties which become the professors of the holy religion of the gospel.

THE APOSTLE, after a suitable Introduction, enters upon the **FIRST PART** of his Epistle, in which he expresses his joy and thankfulness for the conversion and consistent behaviour of the Colossians: expatiates upon the liberties and privileges of the Gentile church, and upon the honour conferred upon himself as the apostle of the Gentiles; and warns them against the artifices of false teachers who would seduce them to subjection to the ceremonial law, or to the delusions of an erroneous philosophy. This subject extends from the third verse of the first chapter to the fourth verse of the third.

And in the First place, the apostle expresses his joy in the conversion of the Colossians; he prays for their improvement; he declares the superiority of Jesus Christ to all other prophets and teachers; he reminds them of the great goodness of God in bringing the Gentiles into the church; and expresses his gratitude for the honour conferred upon him in his appointment to the apostleship of the Gentiles. Ch. i. 3—29.

He then urges the Colossian brethren to persevere in their attachment to the pure unsophisticated doctrine of the gospel; and cautions them against corrupting it by the base intermixture of pharisaic tradition, of false philosophy, and of Jewish or heathen superstitions. Ch. ii. 1—iii. 4.

In the **SECOND PART** of this excellent Epistle, the apostle treats of **PRAC-TICAL DUTIES**, and particularly he insists first, upon personal duties and self-government; secondly, upon the duties which Christians owe to each other; he enters, thirdly, into a brief detail of relative duties; and lastly, represents the conduct which ought to be observed towards unbelievers. Ch. iii. 5—iv. 6.

The Epistle closes with the recommendation of Tychicus and Onesimus, who are the bearers of it; with the salutations of the believers at Rome to those at Colossæ, with an order that the epistles to the Laodiceans and Colossians shall be mutually exchanged and read in both the churches; with a solemn charge to Archippus, and with the apostolical benediction: accompanied with a request that they would not forget that he was now a prisoner.

THE

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

PART THE FIRST.

THE apostle, after a suitable introduction, expresses his joy and thankfulness for the conversion and good behaviour of the Colossians; he expatiates upon the liberty of the Gentile church, and the honour conferred upon himself by his commission to teach the Gentiles, and cautions them against the artifices of false teachers, who would seduce them to subjection to the ceremonial law. Ch. i.—iii. 4. Ch. I.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

C H A P. I. 1, 2.

THE APOSTLE introduces the epistle with the usual salutation, joining the name of Timothy with his own.

PAUL an apostle of Jesus Christ, by divine appointment¹, and Timothy our brother, to the holy² and faithful³ brethren in Christ at Colossæ, favour be unto you, and peace from God our Father⁴. Ver. I.
2.

This epistle is dictated by me, Paul, who am acknowledged in the Gentile churches as an apostle of Jesus Christ, whose office it is to teach his doc-

¹ *By divine appointment.*] So Wakefield. Gr. "by the will of God." "to intimate his extraordinary and miraculous mission, Acts ix. xxvi. and his receiving the gospel by immediate revelation. Gal. i. ii." Peirce.

² *Holy:*] i. e. separated from the common state of mankind to be the people of God, and to

Ch. I.
Ver. 2.

trine, and bear testimony to his resurrection; an honourable office, which I did not arrogate to myself, but to which I was expressly appointed by God, in a way that is well known, and cannot be sufficiently admired. In this salutation I join the name of Timothy my pupil, convert, companion, fellow-labourer, and fellow-prisoner, with my own. And to the holy believers in Christ in the city of Colossæ, who firmly adhere to their principles in seasons of trial and temptation, we heartily wish that God our Father, and their Father, may send that peace which the gospel brings to all who sincerely profess it, and all other blessings comprehended in it, and resulting from it.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE expresses his joy in the conversion of the Colossians, and prays for their improvement: he declares the superiority of Christ to all other prophets and teachers; reminds them of the great goodness of God in bringing them into the church, and expresses his gratitude for his own appointment to the apostolic office. Ch. i. 3—29.

1. The apostle thanks God for their faith and love, and for the success of the gospel at Colossæ, and throughout the world, ver. 3—6.

3. *We give thanks¹ to the God and Father² of our Lord Jesus Christ*

serve him, as the Jews formerly were, and professing Christians now are, Rom. i. 18—25; Exod. xix. 5, 6; Numb. xv. 40; 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. See Peirce.

¹ *Faithful.*] *πιστοίς.* Peirce observes, that “this term being found in the introduction to this epistle, and in that to the Ephesians, and to no one other of St. Paul’s, there is just reason to think it was a term suited to the present notion he had of those he was writing to, with reference to the business he was writing about. I take it, therefore, that by the *faithful brethren*, he means such as stood firm to Christ; which he did not count them to do; who made circumcision necessary to salvation. Gal. v. 1, 2.”

² *God our Father.*] The words “and the Lord Jesus Christ,” which are found in the received text, are wanting in the Clermont, the Corbey, and many other manuscripts, in the Syriac, the Æthiopic, and other versions, and in several ecclesiastical writers; they are also left out in Griesbach’s edition, and in Newcome’s translation.

¹ *We give thanks, &c.*] The apostle having heard a good account of their stedfastness, ver. 3, gives thanks to God for their interest in the hopes and promises of the gospel, ver. 5; which they would have forfeited had they apostatized from the doctrine he taught. “I thank the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ always on your account in my prayers.” Peirce. “praying always for you.” Newcome; who with the public version joins πάντοτε with προσευ-
χόμενοι.

² *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*] “What more could have been said by any Unitarian? It is the same Being that is called our God and Father; and to whom our Saviour

continually in our prayers for you (having heard³ of your faith in Christ Jesus, and your love towards all the saints), on account of⁴ that hope which is laid up for you in the heavens⁵, of which ye have heard before in the true doctrine of the gospel⁶, which hath appeared among you⁷ as it hath also in all the world⁸, where it beareth fruit⁹ and groweth¹⁰, as it hath also among you from the day in which ye heard and acknowledged the favour of God in truth¹¹.

Ch. I.

Ver. 4.

5.

6.

In the daily exercises of devotion, when I bear upon my heart the cases of the several churches of Christ, in the presence of that merciful Being who is the God and Father of our master Jesus Christ, and whom we his disciples of every nation are taught to regard and adore as our Father and our God,

always prayed under the character of his God and Father. Where, therefore, is the evidence of Christ's having any nature superior to ours?" Dr. Priestley.

³ *Having heard, &c.*] Not of their conversion, for this he must have known long before; but of their stedfast adherence to the truth to which he alludes, ver. 2; and of their love to *all* the saints of every denomination, without restricting their affection to those who adhered to the ceremonial law. The word *all* here is unquestionably emphatical, as is rightly observed by Peirce and Macknight. The apostle was apprehensive that they might have been corrupted by judaizing zealots; and he rejoices in the account brought to him by Epaphras, that they adhered to the pure and liberal principles in which they had been originally instructed. See Peirce's note, and Locke on Eph. i. 15.

⁴ *On account of, &c.*] *δια την ελπιδα*. Mr. Peirce not finding any instance of *ευχαρισειν* being followed by *δια* with an accusative, connects this with ver. 4, and supposes that it expresses the motive for the sake of which they persevered in faith and love; *q. d.* the continuance of your faith and love for the sake of heavenly happiness. I rather prefer the common interpretation, which is also that of Wakefield and Newcome, and is most agreeable to the parallel passage in Eph. i. 15—20. There the apostle, thanking God for their faith and love, prays that they may be apprized of the value of the blessings of the gospel, represented by their advancement with Christ into heavenly places. Here he thanks God for the hope treasured up for them in the heavens: *i. e.* in the gospel dispensation.

⁵ *In the heavens.*] "blessing God for the hope and full assurance which you now have of the heavenly happiness promised in the gospel of Christ." So Pyle, and others. But I beg leave to submit whether the word *heavens* may not here be better understood of the heavenly dispensation of the gospel, and whether this interpretation would not better correspond with the sense of *επερανοις* as applied to Christ Eph. i. 20, and to believers Eph. ii. 6. See Locke on the *Ephesians*. It cannot, however, be denied that *hope* is not unfrequently put for the object of hope.

⁶ *The true doctrine of the gospel.*] So Newcome and Wakefield. Gr. "in the word of truth of the gospel."

⁷ *Hath appeared among you.*] So Wakefield. *παροντος εις υμας*, "which is come to you." Newcome.

⁸ *In all the world.*] *i. e.* the known world, and particularly the Roman empire. Peirce thinks that the apostle alludes to the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles.

⁹ *Where it beareth fruit.*] Gr. *και*, and, "beareth fruit." Some good copies leave out *και*, and read, "as it bringeth forth fruit, and increaseth in all the world also, even as among you." See Griesbach and Newcome.

¹⁰ *And groweth.*] These words are found in the most approved manuscripts and versions. See Griesbach. They are wanting in the received text.

¹¹ *The favour of God in truth.*] "Truly, really, substantially." Newcome. "this genuine kindness of God." Wakefield.

Ch. I.
Ver. 6.

I have always remembered you, my beloved brethren at Colossæ, ever since the encouraging accounts which I have received of your character and state; that you believe the gospel; and that undismayed by perils and persecutions you firmly adhere to the faith of Christ; that you love one another; and indeed that your kind affection extends to all of every name and country who truly believe in Jesus, without confining your benevolent regard to those only who mix up the burdensome ceremonial of the law with the free grace of the gospel.

And I bless God, that thus professing your faith in the gospel, and breathing its generous spirit, you have acquired a title to the glorious hope of immortal existence which is treasured up in this heavenly dispensation, and which is secured to all who practically receive it. It is your privilege that you have long ago been put into possession of this invaluable blessing, through the labours of those faithful men who first taught you the uncorrupted doctrine of Christ. And I am happy to assure you that this doctrine, notwithstanding all opposition, is now making great and rapid progress through the whole Roman empire, and indeed throughout the world: and that every where it produces the best effects in the hearts and lives of its sincere professors, exactly as it has done at Colossæ, ever since you knew and became justly sensible of the value of the gospel, that best and most important gift of God to mankind.

2. He mentions Epaphras, who had first preached the gospel to them, as the person from whom he had received this encouraging account, ver. 7, 8.

7. *Even as¹ ye learned it of Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is*
8. *a faithful minister of Christ in our stead²; who has also declared to us your love in the spirit³.*

¹ *Even as.*] καί, even, is found in the best copies, and is introduced into the text by Griesbach.

² *In our stead.*] ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. This is the reading of the Alexandrine and Clermont manuscripts, and approved by Griesbach, though not received into his text. The apostle, though he preached the gospel in the Lesser Asia, could not himself visit every city in person; but he probably sent evangelists, such as Timothy, Epaphras, &c. to preach the gospel in those places which he could not reach, and amongst the rest to Colossæ: where Epaphras, fully instructed by the apostle, seems to have met with great success. Epaphras may be a contraction for Epaphroditus, but he could not be the same person with that Epaphroditus whom Paul sent to Philippi.

³ *Love in the spirit.*] i. e. your Christian affection; your love to me on account of my knowledge of the gospel, and my zeal and sufferings in its defence. Or, perhaps, more generally,

Ch. I.
Ver. 8.

I rejoice in your faithful adherence to that pure doctrine which you learned from Epaphras, whose name I cannot mention but in terms of the highest commendation. He is my beloved companion in the service of Christ, a faithful fellow-labourer in the propagation of the gospel. And as it was not in my power to visit Colossæ when I was preaching the gospel in those regions, I sent him to officiate in my stead; in which mission he was blessed with extraordinary success. It is from him that I have received here at Rome, where I am now a prisoner, that delightful intelligence of your Christian affection to each other, to all believers, and to myself, which has cheered my spirits, and is the subject of my devout and habitual gratitude.

3. He assures them of his daily earnest prayers for their improvement in spiritual gifts and in Christian virtues; and especially in knowledge, holiness, and fortitude, ver. 9—12.

For this cause we also, from the day that we heard these things⁴, cease not to pray for you, and to request that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will⁵ in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

9.

After having heard so good a report concerning you, we could not but entertain a favourable opinion of you, and an anxious solicitude for your improvement. And for this reason, ever since I heard these pleasing tidings, I have made it the subject of my daily prayers to the Father of mercies, that you may possess a complete, distinct and comprehensive knowledge of the will of God in the gospel dispensation, so that it may not be in the power of any false teacher to mislead you by the arts of sophistry, or pretences of superior knowledge.

That ye may walk worthy of the Lord⁶ so as to please him in all things, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge⁷ of God.

10.

your love to all the saints, to believers in general, without restriction. "Your love in your spirit—your sincere and hearty love. See Rom. i. 9." Newcome.

⁴ These things.] So Peirce. *i. e.* all the good things he had before mentioned concerning them, ver. 5, 6.

⁵ Filled, &c.] Compare Eph. i. 8, 9 : *i. e.* a comprehensive view of the will of God, and particularly concerning the call of the Gentiles, the mystery which was now revealed. See Peirce and Locke on Eph. i. 17. "spiritual understanding; *i. e.* an understanding of spiritual things." Peirce.

⁶ That ye may walk worthy of the Lord.] περιπατησαι for εις το περιπατησαι. Comp. Eph. iii. 17. Right knowledge is to lead to right practice. "so as to please him in all things." Newcome. Gr. "to all pleasing."

⁷ In the knowledge.] The best manuscripts read τη επιγνωσει. "Επιγνωσις major, perfectior, et exactior cognitio et scientia; nam επι in compositis haud raro auget significationem." Schleusner.

Ch. I.
Ver. 10.

We also pray that your conduct may correspond with your faith and knowledge, that it may become your Christian profession, that it may be in all respects acceptable to God, who is then best pleased when those who profess the faith of Christ abound most in the fruits of righteousness, and increase in the practice of those virtues which prove them to be the genuine children of God. Obedience to the precepts will also contribute to the increase of your knowledge of the scheme of the gospel, and of the wisdom of God in it.

11. *Being endued with all strength according to his glorious power¹, unto*
12. *all patience and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks unto the Father, who by enlightening us² hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints.*

I further implore, that your faith may be confirmed by the possession of miraculous powers, and that your minds may be invigorated by the principles and hopes of the Christian religion, so that you may bear the afflictions of life, and particularly all persecution for the sake of Christ, not only with patience, meekness, and forbearance, but with joy and gratitude; giving thanks to God for your instruction in the discoveries, and your participation in the privileges of the gospel dispensation, whatever trials and sufferings you may be called to endure for the profession of it.

4. The apostle gratefully acknowledges God as the author of the happy change which had taken place in the state of the converted Gentiles, ver. 13, 14.

13. *Who hath rescued us from the dominion of darkness³, and hath trans-*

¹ *Endued with all strength according to his glorious power.*] This may be understood either of miraculous powers, or of fortitude and strength of mind, probably the latter. The *glorious power* of God is that which was exhibited in the conversion of the Gentiles, and which, Eph. i. 19, he compares to the power exerted in raising Christ from the dead. See Peirce.

² *By enlightening us.*] Mangey (see Bowyer) puts a comma after *ἡμᾶς* and *ἀγίων*, see Eph. i. 18, which favours this interpretation. Rosenmuller also approves it. If the common construction be retained, the inheritance among the saints in light is, as Mr. Peirce well observes, opposed to the darkness, ver. 13, “and signifies the light which the saints have by the gospel in this world.” See Eph. v. 8. Dr. Macknight adopts this interpretation. Peirce remarks that *us* and *we*, ver. 12, 13, 14, manifestly signify the Gentile converts. Mr. Wakefield translates the passage, “giving thanks to the Father for thinking us worthy of this share of the lot of the saints in light:” and he takes this to be the force of the word *ἐκαιωσαντι* here, and 2 Cor. iii. 6, 1 Tim. i. 12.

³ *Dominion of darkness.*] In the writings of the apostle the world is often represented as divided into two great empires. The unbelieving world is the empire of darkness, under the government of Satan, the enemy, the prince of darkness, the God of this world: believers are the kingdom of light, under the government of Christ, enlightened by his doctrine and regulated by his laws. To be translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God’s beloved son, is to be converted to the Christian religion. Eph. vi. 12, Acts xxvi. 18

lated us into the kingdom of his beloved son; by whom we have this deliverance⁴, even the remission of sins⁵.

Ch. I.
Ver. 14.

Of all the numerous topics of thanksgiving, there is none more worthy of being insisted upon with devout and ardent gratitude, than the happy change which by the mercy of God has taken place in your moral state. You were once subjects of the empire of darkness; poor, ignorant, idolatrous, vicious heathen; who knew nothing of God or duty, or of a future life. You are now by divine goodness introduced into a new and happy community, into a kingdom which God himself has lately established in the world, and placed under the government of his beloved Son Jesus Christ, whom he has commissioned to reclaim mankind from that wretched state of superstition and vice in which they are involved, and to enlighten their minds upon subjects of the greatest moral importance. And it is by his ministry and doctrine that we all, whether Jews or heathen, who now profess to be his disciples, have been delivered from our respective errors and prejudices, and from a state of hostility and alienation have been introduced into a state of external peace and amity with God; which, if we improve properly, will ensure our everlasting felicity.

5. The apostle proceeds in bold and highly figurative language to represent the dignity of Christ as the head of the new creation, and the renovator of the moral world, ver. 15—20.

Who is an image of the invisible God⁶, the first-born of the whole creation⁷.

15.

⁴ *This deliverance.*] The received text adds *δια τῆς αἱματός αὐτοῦ*, *through his blood*; but these words are wanting in all the uncial, and in many other MSS. and in most of the ancient versions, and are left out of the text by Griesbach, Wakefield, and Newcome.

⁵ *Remission of sins.*] See Eph. i. 7, “we are no longer regarded as unholy, or in an uncovenanted state.” Dr. Priestley, who was not aware of the true reading of this text, observes, that “to deliver mankind from a state of heathen darkness, and to bring them into a state of gospel light, Christ submitted even to death. This is the most natural meaning of the passage; which is far from implying that Christ redeemed mankind from the punishment due to sin, by dying in their stead, becoming the object of God’s wrath for us. God the righteous judge can never so confound the innocent and the guilty.”

⁶ *An image, &c.*] Gen. i. 26. Man is said to be made in the image of God, as having dominion over the creatures; and here Christ is represented as an image of God, as being the sovereign of that kingdom which God has established in the world. Nor is there any reason to suppose that Christ exercises any personal authority over believers: but as the dominion of Satan signifies the dominion, not of a real person, but of ignorance, idolatry, and vice, so the dominion of Christ is the dominion, not of Christ personally, but of the doctrines and the spirit of the gospel.

⁷ *First-born, &c.*] *πρωτοτοκος*, an expression of endearment similar to the expressions, *beloved*, ver. 13, and *only-begotten*, John iii. 16. See also Exod. iv. 22. The meaning may be

Ch. I.
Ver. 15.

Our honoured master Jesus Christ, the sovereign of this new empire, the author of this new and happy state of things, has received from God a commission for this purpose, and in his regal capacity he acts as the delegate and representative of his heavenly Father; so that God does as it were become visible in him, and makes known his pleasure by him. And so great and astonishing is the change which takes place in the moral state of those who are converted from heathenism to Christianity, that it may fitly be represented as a new creation, of which Christ is the former and the head.

16. *For in him¹ were created all things² in the heavens and upon the earth³, the visible and the invisible⁴, whether thrones or dominions, or*

that Christ is the most distinguished person in the new dispensation, the chief of the prophets and messengers of God; as much superior to the rest as the first-born son is to the other children of the family. It may also have reference to priority in time, as well as in rank, ver. 18. He was the first who rose from the dead.

¹ *In him.*] All things are said to be created *in him* *εν αυτω*, by him *δι' αυτου*, and for him *εις αυτον*. The apostle appears evidently to intend a distinction which the generality of interpreters have overlooked. All things are created *in him*: *i. e.* all are new-modelled under the Christian dispensation, or by the profession of Christianity. This is the proper sense of *εν αυτω*. See Rom. xvi. 2, 7, 8; 2 Cor. v. 17, where *εν Χριστω* and similar phrases evidently mean nothing more than professing Christianity; the consequence of which was such a change in their moral state as might be called a new creation. "If any man be in Christ Jesus," *i. e.* a Christian, "there is a new creation;" an expression exactly similar to those which occur here. See also Gal. vi. 15.

² *Were created all things, &c.*] Observe that the apostle does not say that natural objects, the heavens, the earth, the sea, &c. were made by Christ; the formation of these things is uniformly attributed to the Supreme Being. Moreover, if the observation in the preceding note be just, that the words *εν αυτω*, *in him*, imply that this change took place in consequence of the Christian dispensation, it entirely precludes the notion of a creation of natural substances. Also when the apostle enters into the detail of things said to be created, he mentions neither animate nor inanimate beings, neither angels nor men, but enumerates merely states of things, thrones, dominions, &c.; which, whatever they mean, are not substances, but orders and ranks, or conditions, of being: so that nothing can be more astonishing than the confidence with which the generality of Christian interpreters explain this text as asserting that all natural substances, all worlds and all their inhabitants, and even celestial intelligences, angels, archangels, and the like, were created by Christ; than which nothing could be more remote from the apostle's meaning.

Archbishop Newcome here adopts the common interpretation. "Here," says he, "a proper creation is meant, and not a figurative one to good works: *thrones*, &c. are several orders of angels." But what evidence have we of this fact?

Dr. Priestley gives a more probable interpretation. "The countenance," says he, "which this passage has given to the notion of Christ being under God the creator of all things, has arisen from not attending to the meaning of the word which we render *creation*. In the scriptures it is often used to express renovation, or a happy change in the constitution of things, such as was brought about by the gospel. Isaiah evidently uses the term in this sense: *Behold I create all things new!*" See an excellent *Essay on the Creation of all Things by Jesus Christ*, by Mr. Tyrwhit of Jesus Coll. Cambridge in the *Commentaries and Essays* published by the Society for Promoting the Knowledge of the Scriptures, No. 14, vol. ii.

³ *In the heavens, &c.*] *i. e.* amongst Jews and Gentiles. See Locke on Eph. i. 10, 20.

⁴ *Visible and invisible:*] *i. e.* as I understand it, the Jews, who formerly stood in a visible relation to God as theirs by covenant; and the Gentiles, who had no external badge of communion with him. It seems surprising, if any thing relating to the prejudices and errors of man-

*principalities, or powers*⁵, *all were created by him and for him*⁶; *and he* Ch. I.
*is superior to all things*⁷, *and all these things are holden together in* Ver. 17.
*him*⁸.

Under this new dispensation, introduced by Christ, a most extraordinary and astonishing revolution has taken place in the moral world. It is, as I have just expressed it, a new creation: a creation not indeed of natural but of moral objects; not of things, but of states of things; not of external dignities, but of religious privileges. Under this new and heavenly dispensation Jews and Gentiles undergo a glorious and a happy change; they who were formerly the members of the visible church, and they who possessed no external badge of relation to God, are now formed into one harmonious community; and those who were most eminent for rank and station under the former covenant, cheerfully resign all former distinctions for the common but truly honourable character of believers in Jesus. This happy change was introduced by him, by his doctrine, his miracles, his sufferings, his resurrection, his exaltation, and by the mission of his spirit, and it terminates in his well earned honour. For he is exalted to the high dignity of the chief of all the prophets and messengers of God, both under the

kind concerning religion could occasion surprise, that when the apostle, entering into detail, specifies "thrones and dominions" instead of *heaven and earth*, it should not have led his readers to see that *arrangement*, not *creation*, was the object of his discourse. "From him were derived," says Dr. Doddridge in his exposition, "the visible splendour of the celestial luminaries, the *sun*, the *moon*, and the *stars*, even all the hosts of these lower heavens, and from him the yet brighter glories of invisible and angelic beings."

Such is Dr. Doddridge's distribution of the subject, and such would have been the distribution of the apostle, had his train of ideas been the same as that of Dr. Doddridge. But he never thought, nor did he suspect that any of his readers would think, of attributing to the humble and lowly Jesus the power of creating the celestial luminaries. And yet the above-mentioned learned expositor gravely expresses his surprise that the Socinians should interpret this of the new creation, and thinks it incredible, "if the evidence were not so undeniably strong, that any set of learned commentators could fall into so unnatural an exposition."

⁵ *Thrones, &c.*] The apostle seems to refer here to the orders and ranks of persons holding offices in the Jewish church, which having been alluded to under the name of heaven, the officers employed in it, prophets, priests, Levites, &c. are fitly represented under names given to a supposed celestial hierarchy. The meaning is, that Jesus has introduced a new order of things into the visible church, and that all who are employed to dispense the gospel and to occupy offices in the Christian church, receive their commission from him, whether apostles, evangelists, &c. and that he, by his spirit, qualifies them for their work. See Eph. i. 20, 21.

⁶ *By him and for him.*] δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτόν. All things are *by* or *through* him. Christ is the medium of the new dispensation of the renovation of the moral world. All are created *for* him, that is, to be governed by him, and to reward his obedience and sufferings by the unspeakable delight which he derives from having been honoured as the medium of accomplishing the gracious purposes of God to man.

⁷ *Superior to all things.*] "above all things." Wakefield.

⁸ *Holden together in him.*] The Jewish and Gentile church are united in Christ. See Wakefield. Christ is the chief corner-stone, Eph. ii. 20.

Ch. I.
Ver. 17.

old and the new dispensation; and in the great principle, allegiance to him, believers of all nations, without any invidious distinctions, harmoniously unite.

18. *And he is the head of the body, the church; being the first-fruits¹, the first-born from the dead, so as to be first in all things.*

Christ and his church are now one mystical person: Christ is the head, and the church the body, which is indeed necessary to the completion of his person, and which derives life and vigour from his doctrine and his spirit. And that he is entitled to this pre-eminence, is evident from considering that he is the first-fruit of the glorious harvest, the first human being who is raised to immortal life, and who is thus become the pattern and pledge of the final resurrection of all mankind.

- 19, 20. *For by him God was pleased to inhabit the whole complete body²: and through him to reconcile all things to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven³, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

The church, which is the body, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, is the completion of Christ, who is the head: and God is pleased to dwell in this united church, and to manifest his favour and love to it by those gifts of the holy spirit, which he has authorized his Son to bestow so liberally upon it. And by the mission of Jesus, and particularly by his death, he has confirmed the new covenant and set aside the old; incorporating Jew and Gentile into one harmonious society, of which Jesus is the head. Being thus united to *him* by faith, they are joined in bonds of fraternal affection to each other, and no longer regard each other with an envious or a malignant eye.

¹ *First-fruits.*] ἀπαρχή. this is the reading of five manuscripts, and the connexion seems to require it. 1 Cor. xv. 20. See Griesbach and Peirce. If ἀρχή is the true reading, it is probably a marginal gloss, and Mr. Wakefield observes, that it is wanting in the Æthiopic version.

² *God was pleased to inhabit the whole complete body.*] “ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδοκῆσε παντὶ τῷ πληρωμᾷ κατοικῆσαι. Quoniam per eum visum est patri, omnem universitatem inhabitare.” Castalio; who observes, that whenever an infinitive verb is in the New Testament joined with εὐδοκῆσε it always denotes the action of him who is spoken of as pleased. Peirce adopts this interpretation, and renders the text, “it seemed good to God to inhabit all fulness by Christ:” that is, to inhabit the church, which is the πληρωμα, “the fulness or complement of Christ.” Eph. i. 23. “All is added because there is a double fulness, a fulness of the Jews and a fulness of the Gentiles.” Adopting this interpretation, I have a little altered the phraseology in the translation, to make it more intelligible to the English reader.

³ *Things on earth, &c.*] i. e. Jews and Gentiles. “This sense,” as Peirce justly observes, “best suits the connexion, and coincides exactly with the parallel passage, Eph. ii. 14—16. He is our peace who hath made both (Jews and Gentiles) one,” &c. Nevertheless, this learned expositor declines, though with reluctance, to adopt this interpretation, which gives the only rational and proper sense, and explains the text as referring to some unknown and incomprehensible reconciliation of angels and men.

6. The apostle assures the Colossians that being now, by the death of Christ, introduced into a new and holy community, all the privileges and blessings of it shall be ensured to them, provided that they adhere faithfully to their Christian profession, ver. 21—23. Ch. I.

And you who were formerly aliens and enemies in your minds by wicked works⁴, he hath now indeed⁵ reconciled through the death of his fleshly body⁶, that he might present you before himself⁷ holy and spotless, and irreproachable. Ver. 21.
22.

Of this church, which is the mystical body of Christ, you are now approved members. Formerly, indeed, you were aliens from this holy community; being in principle and affection idolatrous and vicious heathen, you were enemies to the people of God, and had neither the wish nor the power to join that venerable society. But the death of Christ (I speak now not of his mystical but of his natural person) has put an end to the Jewish peculiarity, and has introduced a dispensation by which Jew and Gentile are reconciled to each other and to God. Into this society you have been introduced by Christ; and his gracious intention is, that by this means you may attain, not only to a state of privilege, but to virtue of character, that so you may become honourable and useful members of that glorious body of which he is the exalted head.

If ye continue⁸ in the faith, firm on its foundation, and be not moved away from the hope of that gospel which ye have heard, which hath been proclaimed to the whole creation under heaven⁹, of which I, Paul, have been appointed a minister. 23.

I must, however, faithfully warn you that your improvement, and even your safety, depend upon your perseverance. You have no right to expect the

⁴ *Aliens and enemies by wicked works.*] See Eph. ii. 12. “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” Peirce.

⁵ *Indeed.*] $\delta\eta$ for $\delta\epsilon$. Dr. Mangey. See Bowyer's *Conjectures*.

⁶ *Reconciled through the death of his fleshly body.*] So Wakefield. The fleshly body is put in opposition to the spiritual or mystical body, ver. 18, 24. See Newcome. The death of Christ reconciles Jews and Gentiles, by putting an end to the Jewish peculiarity, and introducing a new and liberal dispensation. This thought is more largely insisted upon Eph. ii. 14—18; which fully explains the apostle's meaning here. See Newcome and Peirce.

⁷ *Before himself.*] $\alpha\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ for $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ the passage, as is well observed by Peirce and others, is exactly parallel to Eph. v. 27, “that he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

⁸ *If ye continue, &c.*] $\epsilon\iota\gamma\epsilon$. I prefer this translation to that of Peirce, who renders the phrase, “since ye continue.” See Wakefield.

⁹ *The whole creation, &c.*] “to Jews and Gentiles.” Newcome.

Ch. I.
V 23.

blessings of the gospel any longer than you adhere to the profession of it ; resting your hope on a practical belief of the fundamental truth that Jesus is the Christ, and not being influenced by any consideration whatever to depart from the genuine simplicity of that doctrine, which is the only proper ground of hope ; which has been preached by the command of Christ to all mankind without distinction, even to the idolatrous heathen ; and which I esteem it my greatest honour that I, notwithstanding my great unworthiness, have been selected, and expressly appointed, to be a teacher and publisher.

7. The apostle expresses the joy which he experienced amidst, and even on account of, the difficulties and persecutions which he endured in the discharge of his honourable commission, ver. 24—26.

24. *Now I rejoice in these¹ sufferings for you ; and am in my turn² filling up that which remains of the afflictions of Christ³ in my person, for the sake of his body, which is the church.*

Having mentioned my character as a minister of this new dispensation, let me assure you that the sufferings which I endure in the faithful discharge of my apostolic duties are far from exciting regret at my appointment to that honourable office. On the contrary, the persecutions I now undergo

¹ *These sufferings.*] The pronoun *μς* (my) in the received text, is wanting in the best manuscripts, and is omitted in Griesbach's edition, and in Newcome's version.

² *In my turn.*] *ανταναπληρω.* Le Clerc observes, that the apostle elegantly insinuates that he had formerly made others suffer for Christ. *Art. Crit.* part ii. sect. i. c. 12. See Peirce and Macknight. "I who formerly persecuted the church, now in my turn fill up, by my bodily sufferings, what remains behind in the course of my life of the afflictions allotted to me because of Christ. See Elsner." Newcome.

³ *Afflictions of Christ.*] *i. e.* for the sake of Christ, or such sufferings as Christ underwent, 2 Cor. i. 5. See Newcome. Dr. Doddridge observes, that "the apostle considered it as the plan of providence that a certain measure of sufferings should be endured by this body of which Christ was the head, and he rejoices to think that what he endured in his own person was congruous to that wise and gracious scheme." "This passage may mean either that the apostle partook largely of what remained in the cup of affliction of which Christ drank ; or that Paul in his person endured to the utmost whatever affliction had been endured by others in the Christian cause." Philalethes's *Translation of Colossians*, &c. 1819. "It is remarkable," says Dr. Priestley, "that the apostle, in speaking of his own sufferings for the sake of the gospel, represents them in the same light with the sufferings of Christ himself, as both having the same general object and effect. Christ laid down his life for his friends and for the church, and the apostle also was ready to lay down his for the sake of Christ's body, which is the church. This is language which he could never have used if he had considered the death of Christ as the means of making atonement for the sins of men. On this idea there would be great presumption and profaneness in the apostle's language. The idea which his language naturally conveys to us is this, That a great deal of suffering was necessary to establish the Christian church. That of Christ was one part, but not the whole ; that of the apostles and other Christians must be added to it."

for preaching the gospel to the heathen are to me a source of exquisite satisfaction, as undoubted testimonies to my fidelity and efficacious means of success. I was once a persecutor of the church of Christ; in my turn I am now a sufferer in the same cause; and being a member of the mystical body, I willingly bear my share of the persecutions which that body is destined to endure in order to promote the growth and perfection of the whole.

Ch. I.
Ver. 24.

Of which church I have been appointed a minister, in reference to that dispensation of God which hath been intrusted to me for you, that I may fully teach the word of God; even the mystery⁴, which hath been concealed from ages and generations⁵, but which is now made manifest to his saints.

25.

26.

In the church of Christ I am appointed to execute a very honourable and important office for your benefit; being charged with a commission to teach in the most explicit and undisguised manner an important doctrine, which constitutes an essential and glorious part of the gospel dispensation; a doctrine which was indeed completely concealed from our ancestors, who lived under the ceremonial dispensation; but which is now revealed in the clearest manner to all who are sincerely willing to hear and to welcome the joyful tidings.

8. The apostle explains his meaning to be the admission of Gentiles to equality of privileges with Jews in the Christian church, a doctrine which it was the labour of his life to teach and inculcate, ver. 27—29.

To whom God willed to make known the glorious riches of this mystery⁶ towards you⁷ Gentiles, which mystery is Christ the hope of glory.

27.

⁴ The mystery, &c.] i. e. the call of the Gentiles to equal privileges with the Jews; see Eph. iii. 4—10, where the same subject is treated of more at large.

⁵ Ages and generations:] i. e. the times under the law, which were measured by jubilees, and are therefore called χρόνοι αἰώνιοι, secular times. Before the days of Abraham, the call of the Israelites to be the peculiar people of God was as much a mystery as the call of the Gentiles afterwards. See Peirce, and Locke's note on Rom. xvi. 25. It was only during the Jewish dispensation that this mystery concerning the Gentiles could exist.

⁶ Glorious riches, &c.] Gr. the riches of the glory. See Rom. ix. 23; Eph. i. 17, 18, ii. 7, iii. 16; Phil. iv. 19. Indeed, whenever the apostle mentions the admission of the converted Gentiles to equal privileges with the Jews, he seems at a loss for words to express his admiration, joy, and gratitude upon the occasion. "This great mystery," says Dr. Priestley, "to which the apostle often alludes, was the call of the Gentiles to partake of the privileges of Jewish Christians, without circumcision or conformity to any other Jewish rites. This does not now strike us as a thing of very great magnitude, but in that age it must have appeared of the greatest; and accordingly we find that the minds of the Jewish converts were never thoroughly reconciled to it. That the kingdom of Christ was not of this world, and that uncircumcised Gentiles were proper subjects of it, were two great articles of faith which Christians learned after the descent of the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost."

⁷ Towards you.] See Wakefield, who thinks there can be little doubt that the words ἐν ὑμῖν are transposed. For ὅς, the common reading in the last clause, the Alexandrine and two other

Ch. I.
Ver. 27.

To true believers, who are separated by their Christian profession from the ungodly and idolatrous world, God has been graciously pleased to communicate the knowledge of his purposes of mercy towards the ignorant and despised heathen, namely, that the doctrine of Jesus, which is taught among you, and received by you, who were formerly idolaters, entitles you to a participation in that glorious hope which is the peculiar privilege of the sons of God, the hope of an everlasting inheritance.

28. *Whom we preach, admonishing every man¹, and instructing every man in all wisdom², that we may present every man perfect in Christ³.*

This is the great doctrine which Jesus was commissioned to reveal; this it is the delightful employment of the faithful ambassadors of Christ to teach; this commission they execute, addressing themselves without distinction to Jew and Gentile, admonishing both of the necessity of adopting the gospel scheme, and instructing both in the nature and detail of the Christian doctrine, which is the truest wisdom, the sublimest and most valuable philosophy; and their great design in all is, that they may form these their converts, whether Jews or Gentiles, to the knowledge of truth and the practice of virtue, so that they may be able to present them to their master as believers of the highest order, worthy of being admitted into his glorious kingdom.

29. *To which purpose I also⁴ am labouring, earnestly striving according to his energy, which operates powerfully by me⁵.*

In this glorious cause I also am a humble and unwearied labourer. And though I meet with continual opposition, I persevere in the arduous struggle. Not indeed relying upon my own ability, for that would soon fail me.

uncial manuscripts read δ . See Griesbach. "Spes, pro causa spei. Gloria, felicitas. Sive, spem excellentissimam; spem excellentissimæ felicitatis." Rosenmuller.

¹ Every man.] $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\ \alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\nu$. It is observed that the apostle repeats these words three times in this sentence, strongly implying that the Gentiles, equally with the Jews, were the objects of the apostolic mission. See Peirce and Newcome. "Ex toto commate patet, apostolum has voces, $\delta\epsilon\iota\nu\omicron\tau\eta\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ et $\epsilon\mu\phi\alpha\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ causâ, data operâ repetiisse." Rosenmuller.

² Wisdom.] "This may be understood either of the manner in which the teachers of the gospel conducted their ministry, or, of the subject of their preaching, viz. the doctrine of the gospel, which is the truest philosophy. See 1 Cor. ii. 6." Peirce; who takes it in the latter sense.

³ In Christ.] The received text reads "Christ Jesus." In the best copies the word Jesus is wanting, and is dropped by Griesbach and Newcome. " $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \epsilon\nu\ \chi\rho\iota\varsigma\omega$ est perfectus Christianus, qui bene institutus in religione, ita sentire et agere potest, ut Christianum decet. Col. iv. 10, Eph. iv. 13." Rosenmuller.

⁴ I also;] i. e. "together with the other preachers mentioned ver. 28." Newcome.

⁵ According, &c.] "This may either refer to the miracles which God enabled him to perform in confirmation of his doctrine, see Gal. ii. 8, 2 Cor. xiii. 3, or else to the divine influence upon himself." Peirce. See Rom. xv. 19, 1 Cor. xv. 10.

But supported by that energy which he who called me to the office communicated to me, to qualify me for the honourable and successful discharge of it, and the powerful efficacy of which I continually experience, to strengthen me for every labour, and to carry me triumphantly through every conflict.

Ch. I.
Ver. 29.

SECTION II.

THE APOSTLE urges the Colossians to persist in their adherence to the genuine doctrine of Christ, and cautions them against the corruption of it by the intermixture of pharisaic tradition, of false philosophy, and of Jewish ceremonies. Ch. ii. 1—iii. 4.

Ch. II.

1. The apostle expresses his earnest desire that those Christians who had not enjoyed the benefit of his personal ministry, might nevertheless be fully instructed in the doctrine of Christ, ver. 1—3.

Therefore⁶, I am desirous that you should know what earnest care⁷ I have for you, and for those of Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen me in person⁸.

Ver. 1.

Being thus solicitous to discharge the duties of my apostolic office, I am anxious that you should be apprized, that if I did not visit you in person when I preached the gospel in the cities that are in your neighbourhood, it was not because I was indifferent to your spiritual welfare, but because my journeys were under an immediate divine direction; and I was not permitted at that time to visit Colossæ or Laodicea, nor indeed any of the cities in the proconsular Asia. But I can truly aver that I feel as earnest a desire for your

⁶ *Therefore, &c.*] Dr. Macknight justly observes, “that as this verse does not contain a reason for what goes before, but is an inference from it, γὰρ in this passage is an illative and not a causal particle.”

⁷ *Earnest care.*] “See Thess. ii. 2.” Newcome; who observes, “that the word ἀγωνία here refers to ἀγωνίζομενος, ch. i. 29. The word properly signifies *conflict*.” “It expresses,” says Peirce, “the great solicitude and concern St. Paul had upon his mind for them, the pains he took to preach the gospel, and to assert their liberty against such as opposed, the troubles and difficulties he now underwent upon this account, and the earnestness with which he prayed for them.”

⁸ *Have not seen, &c.*] It is plain that the apostles were under a divine guidance in the progress of their mission, and were not permitted to go where they pleased. See Acts xvi. 6, 7. It appears from the passage referred to, that Paul and Silas were expressly prohibited from preaching the gospel in the proconsular Asia, and though they were allowed to pass through Phrygia, they might be restrained from preaching at Laodicea and Colossæ.

Ch. II. and their instruction and improvement as if you had been converted by my personal ministry.

Ver. 2. *That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together¹ in love, and in all the riches of the most fully assured understanding², even in the complete knowledge³ of that mystery of God⁴, in which⁵ are laid up⁶ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

The primary object of my solicitude for those with whom I have had no personal intercourse is, that they may be so firmly united to each other in the bonds of Christian affection, that they may be proof against every insidious attempt to introduce contentions and divisions among them. Thus united, they will encourage one another to persevere in the purity of the faith, notwithstanding the unjust censures and unfounded denunciations of those who would pervert your minds. And being thus united in affection, may they also be united in the pursuit of Christian knowledge, and especially in the attainment of that most valuable of all knowledge, the complete compre-

¹ *Being knit together.*] “*συμμιζαζειν, conjungere ut duæ traves et similia conjunguntur et compinguntur.*” Rosenmuller. Peirce observes, that “St. Paul thought that the hearty love which Christians bore to one another would be a good means to fortify them against any ill impression from seducers. See Eph. iv. 14—16.”

² *All the riches of the most fully assured understanding.*] *εις παντα πλετον της πληροφοριας της συνεσεως.* See Newcome's margin. Dr. Doddridge translates the clause, “*the richest and most assured understanding:*” and observes, “that the original phrase is extremely emphatical, more agreeable to the Hebrew than to the Greek idiom, and it is one of the many instances of that strong manner of speaking with which the writings of our apostle abound.” “The manner,” says Peirce, “in which he speaks of this mystery, and heaps up expressions concerning it, shows how necessary he apprehended the knowledge of it to be.” “*Ut ad plenissimam, quæ esse potest, intelligentiam perveniant, πλετος ut sæpe, magnitudinem rei exprimit. πλ. συν. plenitudo, vel certitudo intelligentiæ, summa certitudo.*” Rosenmuller.

³ *Complete knowledge.*] “*επιγνωσις, hic ut sæpe, est exactior cognitio.*” Rosenmuller.

⁴ *Mystery of God.*] The words “and of the Father, and of Christ,” which appear in the received text, are wanting in many copies and versions of good repute, and are omitted in Griesbach's edition.

“This mystery,” as Peirce observes, “is that mentioned before, ch. i. 26, 27. Had he here meant any other, he would certainly have told us what it was.” Newcome also explains it, of “preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.” Philalethes neatly translates the passage, “that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and in all the precious and full capacity of comprehending the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” “The sense is,” says Peirce, “that they might all concur in a full and certain persuasion and public profession of this doctrine.”

⁵ *In which.*] *εν ω.* If the received text is admitted, these words are properly translated *in whom*; i. e. in Christ. “When we consider ch. i. 27, and ch. ii. 2, we shall be induced to think that the words in the verse before us are very applicable to the *mystery of God*; that is, to the gospel preached among the Gentiles. But as the words expunged from Griesbach's text may well be supplied, it remains doubtful whether *mystery*, or *God*, or *Christ*, be the antecedent.” Newcome. If *in whom* be referred to Christ, the meaning will be the same; *q. d.* in the doctrine of Christ. See Rosenmuller.

⁶ *Are laid up.*] *αποκερυφει quum dicit, similitudinem sumit ab arcæ, in qua pecuniæ servantur, indidem promendæ, ubi opus est.*” Rosenmuller.

hension of that glorious truth, which, though long concealed in the counsels of the Most High, is now clearly and distinctly revealed to mankind; and which contains in itself a rich treasure of all that is most important for man to know: namely, that all mankind without distinction are admitted by faith into the privileges of the gospel, by which life and immortality are brought to light.

Ch. II.
Ver. 3.

2. Being as nearly interested for them as if he were present with them, he warns them not to be misled by the specious harangues of false teachers, but thankfully to abide in the doctrine which they had already learned, ver. 4—7.

*Now I say this, lest any man should deceive you by plausible discourses*⁷.

4.

I give you this advice, to love one another, to understand your principles, and to be true to the doctrine of Christ, that you may be upon your guard against the specious harangues of false teachers, who would corrupt your faith. Nothing will so effectually counteract their artifices as being well acquainted with the grounds and reasons of the Christian doctrine.

*For though I be absent in person, yet in spirit I am with you*⁸, *rejoicing at the sight*⁹ *of your order, and the steadfastness of your faith*¹⁰ *in Christ.*

5.

Though I am now in chains at Rome, and cannot personally visit you, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing as much in the account which Epaphras has given me of the decency and good order which prevail in your public assemblies, and of your faithful firm adherence to the pure doctrine of Christ, as if I were actually an eye-witness to every thing that passes in your society.

*As, therefore, ye have received Christ Jesus as your master*¹¹, *so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and confirming yourselves in the faith*¹²: *and as ye have been taught, abounding in thanksgiving*¹³.

6.

7.

⁷ *Plausible discourses.*] πιθανολογια. See Doddridge. "specious doctrines." Wakefield. "persuasive words." Newcome. "Ne quis vos speciosa oratione decipiat." Schleusner.

⁸ *In spirit.*] Peirce observes that "as spirit here stands opposed to flesh, εν σαρκι, it is most reasonable to understand it of St. Paul's own spirit and not of the holy spirit."

⁹ *Rejoicing at the sight.*] χαιρων και βλέπων, hendiadys. Lætabundus observans rectum quem tenetis ordinem." Rosenmuller.

¹⁰ *Stedfastness of your faith.*] i. e. in opposition to those who submitted to the ceremonial law. Gal. v. 1, 2. See Peirce.

¹¹ *Received, &c.*] "As therefore ye received Jesus from me to be the Christ, and the Lord." Wakefield.

¹² *Rooted and built up, confirming yourselves.*] "Eadem res ter dicitur. ἐρριζωμένοι radicibus hærentes, ἐποικοδοµημένοι in fundamento ædificati, ergo firmi: βεβαιωμένοι, firmi. Firmi et fundati et constanter in religione." Rosenmuller. "As ye have received from me the plain doc-

Ch. II.
Ver. 7.

Since, then, you profess to acknowledge Jesus as your master, and to admit no doctrine as of divine original but what you receive from him, and as you have learned this from your pious instructors, let me entreat you to act in character, and to govern your conduct solely by a regard to his authority. Let Christ be the root upon which you grow, and the foundation upon which you build. Acknowledge and bow to no other authority whatever, but firmly adhere to the Christian doctrine. And, as you have been taught by those who have given competent proof of their mission from him, rejoice abundantly in the blessings of the gospel, and in the liberty of the Gentile church: and receive these invaluable gifts with a grateful heart.

3. The apostle warns them against those who, for their own unworthy purposes, would blend Jewish ceremonies and the dreams of a false philosophy with the doctrine of Christ; and reminds them, that being united to Christ as their head, they are subject to no authority but his, ver. 8—12.

8. *Beware lest any man make a prey of you by a vain deceitful philosophy¹, according to the traditions of men², according to the shadows of this world³, and not according to Christ.*

trine of the gospel, free from the specious subtleties of your present teachers, continue in it. Here it is exceedingly evident that by *Christ* we are to understand the doctrine of Christ, or, Christianity. To receive Christ, to walk in Christ, to be rooted and built up in Christ, is here explained by the phrase 'established in the faith.' Dr. Priestley.

¹ *Abounding in thanksgiving.*] The words *ἐν αὐτῇ*, *therein*, are wanting in the Alexandrine and Ephrem manuscripts, and are marked as doubtful by Newcome. The sense is clearer without them. See Griesbach. Mr. Wakefield for *καθώς* reads *καὶ ὡς*, with the Æthiopic translator; which seems preferable.

² *Vain deceitful philosophy.*] "through philosophy and empty deceit." Newcome; who observes that the words are a hendiadys. The philosophers here alluded to were probably Jewish believers, who were zealous for the ceremonial law, and who added some idle speculations of their own to the doctrines of revelation. This indeed has been the primary source of all the corruptions of the Christian religion. It is plain from what the apostle says of these teachers, that they were plausible and selfish. What the erroneous speculations were which they dignified with the name of philosophy is uncertain; perhaps some groundless notions concerning the existence, powers, and worship of angels, and other unintelligible subjects, which the apostle justly stigmatizes as false and vain (see ver. 18), and foreign to the Christian doctrine. See Peirce's note, and Newcome.

³ *Traditions, &c.*] Probably the pharisaic traditions, or those of other philosophic and perhaps platonizing Jews, such as Philo and others.

⁴ *Shadows of this world:*] so, after Le Clerc and Peirce, and upon the authorities they produce, I render *στοιχεῖα* by which are to be understood the Jewish ceremonies, which were types and shadows of the doctrine of Christ, which is the body or substance to which the type refers. *στοιχεῖα* properly signifies *elements* or *first principles*; and in this sense the word is to be understood Gal. iv. 3, 9, where it also expresses the ritual law. Most expositors give it the same signification here, and it cannot be denied that it makes a good sense.

The

The reason why I so strenuously insist upon your firm adherence to the purity of the Christian faith is, that I am well informed that there are some who from interested motives are taking no small pains to seduce you from it. Be, then, upon your guard against those men who set themselves up as philosophic teachers of Christianity, and who profess to add many refined and subtle speculations to the plain word of Christ. Be assured that theirs is a vain and false philosophy, the teachers of which have nothing in view but to promote their own interest, and to make their advantage of your credulity. The doctrines they profess are mere human inventions; the rites they would impose are mere Jewish ceremonies or pharisaical mummary. At best they are the mere types and shadows of a better dispensation, and are not in the least degree obligatory upon the Gentile convert to the faith of the gospel. In a word, the doctrines which they circulate, and the servitude which they enjoin, are quite foreign to the doctrine of Christ, utterly unauthorized by him, and subversive of the freedom of the Gentile church.

Ch. II.
Ver. 8.

For in him resideth substantially⁴ a fulness of divine communications⁵.

9.

I do not deny that the rites and ceremonies of the law were of divine original; but, as I have just observed, they were only shadows, mere rudiments, the occupations of children, which must now be laid aside since Christ has

The Jewish dispensation is called *the world* because its objects and sanctions are of a worldly nature. See Peirce on the place, and Locke on Gal. iv. 3.

⁴ *Substantially.*] *σωματικῶς* *bodily*, in opposition, if Mr. Peirce's and Le Clerc's interpretation be true, to *σκιαι* *shadows*: the manifestations of the divine will, under the law, to those under the gospel, were as the shadow to the substance.

⁵ *Fulness of divine communications.*] *παντοπληρωμα της θεοτητος*. "all the fulness of the godhead." This text is the strong hold of what is called the *indwelling* scheme of the doctrine of the Trinity, of which Dr. Thomas Burnet, Dr. Watts, and Dr. Doddridge are the most considerable advocates: the latter of whom would translate the text, "in whom the whole fulness of deity substantially dwells." See Burnet's *Script. Doct. of the Trinity*, p. 173, 174. But, unless the advocates for this hypothesis mean to assert that the substance and consciousness of the Father is so united with the substance and consciousness of the created Logos as to become one conscious intelligent agent called the Son, who is distinct both from the uncreated Father and the created Logos, which is too absurd to be maintained, they mean nothing: for in any other sense of indwelling, this famous hypothesis is compatible with Arianism, and even with perfect Unitarianism; for it can mean nothing more than that God inspired Christ with the knowledge of his will, and enabled him to work miracles in confirmation of his mission. The apostle's expression lays no foundation for any such erroneous conclusion. Eph. iii. 19 the apostle prays that they may be filled with all the fulness of God; but who supposes that the divine substance is intended? The expression is universally understood of *divine communications*; and such no doubt is the sense of *θεοτης* in this passage, which no one will say is a stronger expression than *θεος* and to argue from the word *σωματικῶς* is arbitrary in the extreme. "All those blessings which proceed from Godhead, and wherewith we are filled, dwell in Christ truly and substantially." Peirce.—"Nam ipsi insunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ divinæ reverâ. *θεοτης* non intelligitur de ipsa natura Dei, tanquam de eo quod habitat in aliquo, sed de illo quod sit a Deo profectum, ab eoque originem ducat." Rosenmuller.

Ch. II.
Ver. 9.

appeared; for in him the law is fulfilled. He is the body of which the law is the shadow; and in him reside all those communications of knowledge and power which are necessary either for the instruction or the conviction of mankind.

10. *And ye are complete in him¹, who is the head of all principality and power².*

You are the body: Christ is the head; a junction with whom is necessary to form the complete mystical person. And as the body derives from the head all its supplies of vital influence, so you derive from Christ all that is necessary to the spiritual life; all that instruction which is requisite to your becoming perfect Christians. You need not look elsewhere: Christ is the head of the apostles, evangelists, prophets, and teachers of the Christian dispensation: they have no authority but what they derive from him. And as to the priests and rabbis of the Jewish œconomy, they are completely superseded, and their authority, so far as you are concerned, is null and void.

11. *In whom ye were circumcised³, by a circumcision not made with hands, by the putting off the fleshly body by the circumcision of Christ⁴.*

¹ *Ye are complete in him.*] *πεπληρωμενοι εν αυτω* q. d. you are his *πληρωμα*, Eph. i. 23, or he is yours; you are complements to each other, as the head and the body make the perfect man; and from him as the head of vital influence you are supplied with all that you want to advance you individually to perfect manhood, or to complete your proportion as limbs of Christ's mystical body; for the apostle does not always keep the ideas distinct. ver. 10, *εν αυτω*, "in him ye are filled;" ver. 11, *εν αυτω*, "in him ye are circumcised;" ver. 12, *αυτω*, "with him you are buried;" *ibid.* "in him you are raised to life."

² *Who is the head of all principality and power.*] Mr. Locke, in his excellent note upon Eph. iii. 10, has made it appear so probable that by these expressions the apostle means, the rulers and teachers, the priests, scribes and pharisees of the Jewish nation, that there can be no reasonable doubt that they are to be taken in the same or a similar sense here. Christ is the head of all principality and power, of all the rulers and teachers of the church, whether under the old dispensation, or the new; under the law, or under the gospel; there is no authority but from him: his disciples are to receive no doctrine but what is taught by his authorized ministers; and upon no account to listen to those who would impose upon them judaical rites.

It is surprising that learned men, who interpret these expressions of the superiority of Christ to angelic beings, should not be aware how improbable it is that the Divine Being, (who in his all-wise administration, is so severely œconomical in the communications of his will, as to reveal nothing but what is of the utmost practical necessity, nothing to gratify idle curiosity,) should reveal facts concerning ranks and orders of angels; which are at best useless, and in general unintelligible to mankind.

³ *In whom ye were circumcised;*] q. d. as constituting Christ's mystical body, what was done by him as necessary to fulfill all righteousness, may be considered as done in or by you. As, therefore, he was circumcised, you may be considered as circumcised in him; not indeed literally, according to the Jewish manner, but in a sublime and spiritual sense. Your circumcision consists in having cast off your heathen idolatries and impurities, and having consecrated yourselves to God.

⁴ *By the circumcision of Christ.*] *εν τη περιτομη* or, "in the circumcision of Christ;" a repe-

And to continue the allegory, the circumcision of Christ may be considered as the circumcision of his mystical body, of which you are a part. This mystical circumcision means that you have entirely laid aside the vanities and impurity of your heathen state, and are now consecrated to God through Christ; and this circumcision is all that is now required of those who profess faith in Christ, and who submit to the rite of baptism, which may not unaptly be called the Christian circumcision.

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Being buried with him in baptism⁵, in which ye were also raised with him through faith in the operation⁶ of God who raised him from the dead.

12.

And such was the effect of your solemn renunciation of heathenism, by the public profession of the Christian doctrine, that it may even be considered as death to your former state, as Christ died upon the cross; and your baptismal immersion resembles his temporary residence in the tomb. But as he was soon raised to life by the power of God, so likewise you emerge from the baptismal water into a new and happy state of existence, in consequence of your assured belief in that wonderful operation of divine power by which Jesus rose from the dead. So that, in consequence of this resurrection with Christ, you have no more to do with heathenism or judaism than if you were inhabitants of a new world.

4. The believers at Colossæ having become dead to their former state of heathen idolatry, and being raised to a new and better life, are under no obli-

tigation of the first clause not unusual with the apostle. Others understand the clause *q. d.* in the Christian circumcision: *i. e.* in baptism, which, under the Christian dispensation, is substituted for circumcision, by which initiatory rite you publicly professed your faith in Christ, and renounced all the impurities and idolatrous practices of your heathen state. This is a very good sense, and seems to be supported by the succeeding words, which allude to the mode of baptism. But it is a singular phraseology, and hardly to be paralleled in the writings of the apostle. See Whitby, Peirce, &c. The fleshly body, or the old man, ch. iii. 9. The received text reads, *τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν*, *sins of the flesh*, which is wanting in the best copies, and dropped by Griesbach.

⁵ *Buried with him in baptism.*] This seems to imply that he had alluded to baptism as the initiatory rite, the Christian circumcision in the preceding verse. In the word *buried* it is generally admitted that the apostle alludes to the mode of baptism by immersion; but allowing this, it does not prove that immersion was universal, much less indispensable. See Newcome. This allusion is pursued by the apostle more at large, Rom. vi. 4, &c., where the apostle represents heathenism as a prior state of existence: professing Christianity is death to that state; immersion is burial; emerging from the baptismal water a resurrection to a new life, similar to the resurrection of Christ; and as Christ never dies again, so believers are never to return to their old state of heathenism, but like Christ are to consecrate their renovated powers to God.

⁶ *Faith in the operation, &c.*] “*ἐνέργειας*, the mighty working of God.” Newcome. Observe here, that it is faith in the resurrection of Christ which constitutes a man a Christian, a disciple of Christ, one of the Christian community, saved and holy. See Rom. x. 9.

- Ch. II. gation to submit to that yoke of ceremonies which their new teachers were
 Ver. 12. desirous of imposing upon them, ver. 13—15.
13. *And you who are dead to the trespasses¹ and to the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath God raised to life with him²; having freely forgiven you*
14. *all those trespasses; having cancelled the bond³ which was in the book of ordinances⁴ against us, which was contrary to us, and taken it from be-*
15. *tween us⁵, nailing it to the cross⁶; and having stripped principalities and powers⁷, he made them a public spectacle, leading them in triumph by him⁸.*

¹ *Dead to the trespasses, &c.]* The received text reads *ἐν τοῖς καὶ τ. λ.* “in trespasses;” *ἐν* however is wanting in several manuscripts: and with Mr. Wakefield I adopt this reading, as better suiting the apostle’s train of ideas, and confirmed by Eph. ii. 1. By faith in Christ they die to trespasses and circumcision, *i. e.* to heathenism and to the law; by immersion they are buried with Christ, by emersion they are raised with him to a new life under the heavenly dispensation of the gospel. Dr. Harwood also omits the particle *ἐν*: he renders the clause, “you who are now dead to your vices,” &c.; and refers to the editions of Erasmus, Aldus, Colinaeus, Strasburg, and Basil, as supporting the same reading.

² *Raised to life with him.]* *συνεζωποιοῖσε.* In the parallel passage Eph. ii. 6, believers are represented as raised with Christ, and sitting with him in heavenly places: that is, according to Mr. Locke, “made partakers of his heavenly kingdom;” or, in other words, put into possession of the privileges of the gospel.

³ *Cancelled the bond.]* This is the proper sense of the word *χειρογραφόν*. See Peirce and Schleusner. It is a writing from the debtor to the creditor, acknowledging the debt. The law of Moses was this handwriting; by which the Jews were bound to observe the law, as the condition of receiving the promise. This handwriting was against us, and contrary to us: it was the means of preventing the union between Jew and Gentile; it was the wall of partition which separated the holy place from the court of the Gentiles. Eph. ii. 14, 15. Newcome thinks that the words *contrary to us* have “the appearance of a marginal explanatory note.”

⁴ *In the book, &c.]* So Mr. Wakefield. “Having entirely cancelled and vacated that bill, consisting of such a variety of ceremonial articles, which we were liable to discharge.” Harwood.

⁵ *From between us.]* *ἤρκεν ἐκ μεσθ,* he took from between us: “a Hebrew change of construction,” says Dr. Newcome, “instead of *ἀπας*. See Eph. i. 20, John i. 32.” He did not suffer this bond to continue between us and the Jews, to separate us from one another. Eph. ii. 14, 15, he calls the ceremonial law the middle-wall of partition, and the cause of enmity between Jews and Gentiles. See Peirce.

⁶ *Nailing it to the cross.]* Grotius observes: “*mos est quibusdam in locis, clavis transfigendi edicta antiquata. Is tunc etiam in Asia videtur fuisse, et ad eum alludere Paulus.*” This allusion to the custom of cancelling a bond by driving a nail through it is adopted by Hammond, Doddridge, and Newcome.

⁷ *Having stripped principalities and powers.]* *τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας,* “these principalities and these powers:” namely, those which have been before alluded to ver. 10, and which were there shown to mean the Jewish hierarchy, the priests and rulers; the crucifixion of Christ, which sealed and ratified the gospel dispensation, completely divested the teachers and rulers of the Jewish dispensation of every species of authority over those who were admitted into the community of believers. And by the extraordinary success of the gospel, they were in a manner led in triumph every where, and exhibited as captives whose power was now at an end.

Dr. Harwood’s translation is, “having pulled down those religious establishments which were supported by the great and powerful.” But this seems wide of the apostle’s meaning.—“By the powerful means used to subdue vice, God showed openly that he triumphed over evil spirits.” Newcome. “God hath made us victorious over the formidable spirits of darkness, having spoiled these principalities and powers of the trophies which they had gained by drawing

I repeat it, my Christian friends, as a circumstance deserving your utmost attention: you are now dead and buried to your former state of heathenism and alienation from God, and in consequence of your baptismal profession your connexion with idolatry is as completely dissolved as that of a dead corpse with the living world. Nevertheless, God has raised you to a new, and holy, and happy life, by the same power by which he raised up Jesus from the dead. And as you were before in a state of sin and alienation from God, you are now, in consequence of your admission into the Christian covenant, in a state of reconciliation and forgiveness. And this communication of evangelical blessings is perfectly gratuitous; it is the free, unmerited, unsolicited gift of God. And whereas your new teachers insinuate that you must submit to the yoke of ceremonial institutions: I earnestly advise you to give no credit to their insinuations. For God has himself cancelled that obsolete bond contained in the writings of Moses, which imposed the severe conditions of acceptance and reconciliation under the former dispensation; keeping Jews and Gentiles at an inaccessible distance from each other. And as it is common to cancel a covenant by driving a nail through the instrument which contains it, so the Mosaic covenant may be said to be nailed to the cross of Christ, being vacated by that event, which ratified the new and liberal dispensation of the Messiah; a dispensation by which all who believe are admitted without distinction to all the privileges of the family of God. Thus, putting an end to the Mosaic covenant, he divested the ministers and officers of the Jewish church of all authority to impose the yoke of the law upon believers in Christ; and by the mission and doctrine of Jesus, by the power and energy of the spirit with which it is attended, and by its triumphant success, he has plainly and publicly transferred the authority, which was once vested in the Jewish priesthood, to the apostles

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us into the grand apostasy." Doddridge. But what reason is there to suppose that any spirit either good or evil is alluded to in this expression? Mr. Peirce's interpretation is very peculiar, viz. "Having taken from good angels their authority, he subjected them to Christ, and proposed them publicly as an example of cheerful obedience to him, causing them to triumph in Christ." Such a hypothesis surely needs no confutation: it is indeed wonderful that a man of so much talent and learning could indulge himself in these wild reveries, or could imagine that a revelation was communicated to mankind to instruct them in the useless tale of a revolution in the celestial hierarchy. "*Hostes, quos Christus contumeliæ publicæ exposuit, sunt defensores illius chirographi de quo sermo fuit, legis Mosaicæ. Defensio enim hujus legis fuit maximum impedimentum religionis Christianæ propagandæ. Christus autem morte sua effecit, ut isti hostes potentissimi, Judæorum principes et sacerdotes, nihil amplius valerent.*" Rosenmuller.

* By him:] i. e. by Christ. God is the agent in view throughout the whole context. See Peirce. Dr. Newcome renders it, "by the cross," and refers to the ancient versions in the Polyglot in confirmation of his interpretation. Origen read *ἐν τῷ ξύλῳ*, by the tree: i. e. the cross.

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and teachers of the Christian dispensation, who alone are now authorized to declare the terms of acceptance with God.

5. Upon these grounds the apostle earnestly dissuades the Colossian Christians from paying any regard to the censures of those false teachers who would either subject them to the yoke of the ceremonial law, or mislead them by plausible but erroneous tenets, repugnant to the doctrine of Christ, ver. 16—19.

16. *Let no one, therefore, call you to account¹ about meat or drink², or with*
17. *respect to a festival, or a new moon, or sabbaths³, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ's⁴.*

¹ *Call you to account.*] *μη κρίνεται*. Dr. Macknight argues, that as they could not prevent others from judging them, it might be more proper to translate the words, "Let no man rule you." In the writings of the Jews it is said of their rulers, that they *judged* Israel. The sense, however, is obvious upon the common interpretation. See Rom. xiv. 3. "decide for you." Philalethes. "*Contemnite ista judicia, nec istis diris perterreamini, quas obnuncient, qui sanctè servari, hæc instituta, a vobis velint.*" Rosenmuller. *q. d.* regard them not.

² *Meat or drink.*] Macknight observes that there was no law which forbade any kind of drink except to the Nazarites: he conjectures, therefore, that abstinence from wine and strong drink might be forbidden by tradition to those who aimed at superior holiness.

³ *Sabbaths.*] Nothing can be more explicit than the apostle's declaration of the entire abolition of the Jewish sabbath, which is plainly no more obligatory upon Christians than the institution of the passover, or the rite of circumcision. The fourth commandment, therefore, is a precept which has no place in the Christian law, and ought never to be appealed to as an argument for a sabbatical institution. And it behoves those who think the observation of a day of sabbatical rest is of such high importance under the Christian dispensation, and who are so loud in their charges against those who deny, or who, as they call it, *profane* the sabbath, to show what authority they have for this imposition. I see none. The old sabbath is expressly repealed, and no new one is enjoined in its stead: always, however, keeping in mind the very obvious and important distinction between the Lord's day as a *weekly religious festival*, in joyful commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, in which way it has been universally observed from the beginning; and as a *day of sabbatical rest* from the common employments and innocent amusements of life, for which there is no precept in the New Testament, and no example in the primitive age; the practice of which was universally discourtenanced in the primitive church, and which, to this day, prevails only in a small proportion of the protestant churches in Europe, and among their descendants in America. In Justin's Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew objects to Christians that, "pretending to excel others, they observe no sabbaths:" Justin replies, "The new law will have you keep a perpetual sabbath. You, when you have passed a day in idleness, think you are religious. The Lord our God is not pleased with such things as these. If any one is guilty of perjury or fraud, let him reform; if he be an adulterer, let him repent; and he will then have kept the kind of sabbath truly pleasing to God. You see that the elements are never idle, and keep no sabbath. There was no need of the observation of sabbaths before Moses, neither now is there any need of them after Jesus Christ." Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, p. 227, 229, 241, edit. Par.; Evanson on the Sabbath, p. 92, 93.

The emperor Constantine was the first who established by law the sabbatical observation of the Lord's day: but he limited this injunction to the inhabitants of towns; a plain proof that he did not regard it as a divine command. The emperor Leo in the fifth century enjoined universal cessation from labour on the first day of the week; but this decree having no force in the West, the Council of Orleans in the sixth century abolished all restrictions of this nature, as savouring more of Judaism than Christianity; only prohibiting husbandmen from working in the field during the time of divine service. The first day of the week, therefore, has never been observed

Being thus completely released from all the restraints of the ceremonial law, do not voluntarily resign your Christian liberty. And if any one assuming airs of authority, or setting himself up for a person of extraordinary sanctity, should take upon himself to condemn you for neglecting the ceremonial distinctions of clean and unclean in articles of food, for not observing the annual festivals of divine appointment, paying no religious respect to the

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with that strictness which the decree of Leo requires in any country of Europe but our own, and that, only since the reign of Charles II. Evanson's *Lett. to Priestley*, p. 138—140, 153—155.

As the law of the country requires suspension from labour on the Lord's day, it is the duty of subjects to obey it. But surely this sabbatical observation of the day can never be of that high moral importance which many apprehend; otherwise Christ and his apostles would never have been so totally silent upon the subject. But will-worship was not confined to the apostolic age; and the censures passed upon those who do not *sabbatize* like others, are as loud and as bitter now as they were seventeen hundred years ago. Let those, therefore, who understand their Christian emancipation, and who determine to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made them free, while they sanctify every day as a sabbath, by abstaining from all evil, as advised by the holy Martyr, encourage themselves at the same time by the exhortation of the apostle, and suffer no man to judge them with respect to the sabbath-day. Regard no man's censure, of whatever rank, or degree, or pretensions, for not receiving as of divine authority, institutions which Christ our sole head, who possesses all authority and power in the church, hath not required.

Dr. Priestley, in his note upon this passage, remarks, that "the Gentiles were under no obligation to observe the seventh day for the purpose of *rest*, as the Jews were; but as the apostles had always been used to *offices of public worship* one day in the seven, and the propriety and use of the custom was never questioned, it cannot be supposed that they would voluntarily abandon so useful an institution, or that they would not recommend it to their disciples." And no doubt it has been the uniform practice from the earliest age of Christianity, and sanctioned by the apostles, to observe the Lord's day as a religious festival; to consecrate it by *offices of public worship*, but not to solemnize it as a day of *sabbatical rest*. Dr. Priestley adds: "It is obvious that a day devoted to public worship should not be a day of *worldly business*, or of *public diversion*; because these things, though innocent in themselves, are of so different a nature from the proper business of the day, that they will be apt to interfere with one another." But may it not be asked, How much of the day is to be devoted to public worship? How the rest of the day can be better employed than in useful labour or innocent amusement? What can be expected from the mass of the people when they are forbidden both to work and to play? and finally, Whether, in fact, there be not more mischief done, and more crimes committed, on the first day of the week, than on all the other days put together?

This, however, is not the question. The sabbatical observation of the Lord's day is by this learned writer, and by many others, placed upon the ground of expedience ALONE. And if it be expedient, let it be observed; but in the name of all that is sacred, let not *expedients of human device* be substituted as *injunctions of divine authority*. The plain question is: Whether the sabbatical observation of the Lord's day is enjoined by divine authority? If it be, let the order be shown, and it shall be obeyed. In the New Testament I see the Jewish sabbath plainly abrogated; I see no new sabbatical institution appointed in its place; and I know that the primitive church explicitly disavowed any such institution. I conclude, therefore, that Christ, our only Master, saw no necessity for appointing an institution, without which, as many now think, the Christian religion could not exist. In whose judgement may we most safely confide?

How, then, it may be asked, is the Lord's day to be observed? Answer: Let a reasonable proportion of it be devoted to Christian worship and instruction; and let the remainder be spent in useful employment or innocent amusement.—They who thus keep the Lord's day, need not regard any man's judgement concerning sabbaths.

¹ *The body is Christ's.*] "As the body stands opposed to the shadow, it must signify the reality, truth, or substance. See ver. 9. This body or substance is of Christ: that is, belongs to him, is his, is only to be found or sought in him, and not in the law." Peirce.

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day of the new moon, and even making no distinction between sabbaths, and other days, regard them not. The gospel knows no such distinction. Under the new dispensation all meats are pure, all days are equal. These ceremonial distinctions were indeed well adapted to the infant state and puerile conceptions of the Jewish church; and were intended to prefigure that improved and liberal state of things which was to take place under the Christian dispensation, which is the manhood and maturity of religion; and is the substance, of which the rites of Moses were merely the shadows. We are taught by Christ that all the creatures of God are good, and consequently that one species of food will not recommend us to God more than another; also that every day is to be devoted to the service of God, and therefore that no one day, either in the week, the month, or the year, is more holy than another. And if any persons presume to teach a different doctrine, and to condemn your conduct, let them know that, acknowledging no master but Christ, you equally disregard their authority, and despise their censures.

18. *Let no one defraud you of your prize¹, by affecting humility in the worship of angels², intruding into those things which he hath not seen³; rashly*
 19. *puffed up by his carnal mind⁴, and not adhering firmly to the head⁵, from which the whole body being supplied and compacted by connecting joints, increaseth with a very large increase⁶.*

¹ *Defraud you, &c.*] So Newcome. Mr. Peirce translates καταβραβεύετω, condemn. The word is used in both senses. See Schleusner.

² *Affecting humility, &c.*] “*Θελων*,” says Archbishop Newcome, “seems equivalent to *Θελητης, εθελοντης*, ‘a voluntary in humility,’ as in the margin of the bible.” Literally it may be rendered “a volunteer in humility in the worship of angels.” It alludes to those who, from pretended humility, applied to angels as mediators to render their prayers acceptable to God. That the Jews regarded the angels as mediators, is evident from Tobit, ch. xii. and from a passage in Philo quoted by Peirce. It seems highly probable that the apostle here refers to the Essenes, a sect of the Jews who practised great austerities, and who boasted that they knew and preserved with great care the names of angels. See Joseph. *De Bell. Jud.* l. ii. c. 7. § 12. and Aldrich’s note. Vide Peirce *in loc.*

³ *Intruding into, &c.*] “*Ingressus in ea*.” Bos. See also Elsner, that the word signifies “*inmiscere se, ingerere, rebus non ad se pertinentibus*.” Newcome. “boldly prying into, and dictating about, matters which he knows nothing of.” Peirce.

⁴ *Carnal mind.*] “And this he is led to by his Jewish temper.” Peirce; who observes, “that this is the sense in which the apostle often uses the words *σαρξ* and *σαρκικος*, and refers to Gal. iii. 3, 2 Cor. xi. 18. See Locke. Phil. iii. 3, 4; Heb. vii. 16. ix. 10.

⁵ *The head.*] “Christ. The expression has a reference to ver. 10.” Newcome. “*κρατειν τινα, sectari aliquem, eique tenacissime inherere*.” Rosenmuller.

⁶ *With a very large increase.*] “In the original, ‘with the increase of God,’ a well known form of the Hebrew superlative degree.” Harwood. “Upon the whole, the thing which the apostle cautions against is the worshiping of angels: the pretence by which this was endeavoured to be ushered in was, that this was most agreeable to humility: what St. Paul says of their intruding into things they had not seen, their being puffed up by a fleshly mind, and not holding the head, is his censure upon their conduct; and when he says, ‘Let no man judge or condemn you in this respect,’ he means that the Colossians should not be moved with, or at all regard, any such judgement. Compare ver. 16.” Peirce.

I have cautioned you against some who would infringe your liberty by bringing you under the yoke of the ceremonial law; but there are others against whose doctrines and practices I must enter a still stronger protest. They are so radically inconsistent with the essential doctrines of Christ, that to embrace them would be to renounce the profession, and with it the rewards, of Christianity. Guard strictly, then, against the plausible insinuations of those teachers who, making loud pretensions to superior humility, and representing it as unpardonable pride in sinful man to address his supplications immediately to a holy God, inculcate the worship of angels as mediators to intercede with God for us. This doctrine and the teachers of it are reprehensible in the highest degree. It is an arrogant intrusion into things which are not revealed, and of which, therefore, it is impossible that these pretended teachers can have the least knowledge. And, while they boast of their humility, they are in fact conceited to a high degree with this groundless notion, which they vainly regard as a profound philosophical speculation annexed to the doctrine of Moses. But the most important consideration of all is, that by this doctrine they entirely separate themselves from Christ, the only mediator between God and man, the only head and law-giver of the church, which is his mystical body, vitally united to him, and which lives, and grows, and thrives, only as it derives from him the nourishment of pure and unsophisticated truth. If, therefore, under any pretence whatever, you become worshipers of supposed invisible and created spirits, you are no longer the disciples of Christ, nor true and accepted members of his visible church.

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6. The apostle, addressing himself particularly to those converts who were disposed to submit to the yoke of the ceremonial law, argues strongly against their subjecting themselves to a ritual to which they were by profession dead, ver. 20—23.

Seeing⁷ that ye are dead with Christ from the rudiments⁸ of the world,

20.

⁷ *Seeing.*] “*εἰ* for *εἴ γε*” see ch. iii. 1.” Wakefield, Harwood. The apostle alludes to ver. 12 and 13.

⁸ *Rudiments,*] or, *shadows*; *σκιαιωγὰς*, i. e. from the Jewish ritual; see ver. 8: *q. d.* you have renounced all expectation of being benefited by the observation of rites and ceremonies. Mr. Peirce thinks this paragraph is addressed to the Jewish converts only, for they alone were attached to Jewish rites, and were dead by profession to Jewish ordinances, under which the Gentile converts, whom through the epistle he continually praises for their steadfastness in the faith, (see ch. i. 4, 6, 7, ii. 5, 6, 7) had never lived. But the apostle seems to represent the heathen converts as dead by profession, not only to their heathen idolatrous state, but to all expectation

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 Ver. 21, 22. *dinances (eat not*³, *taste not, touch not, all which meats*⁴ *are made to be*
 23. *consumed by the use of them), according to the commandments and the*
*doctrines of men*⁵: *which, having*⁶ *indeed a pretence of wisdom*⁷ *in will-*
*worship*⁸, *and humility of mind, and corporal severity, are in no estima-*
*tion*⁹, *but serve to the gratification of the flesh*¹⁰.

Let me speak freely to those among you who are disposed to submit to that yoke of useless rites which the Jewish sectaries endeavour to impose.

of benefit from any other system than Christianity; and though the majority of heathen converts might be steadfast in their adherence to the faith, yet some might, and probably did, incline to listen to their judaizing teachers; and no doubt it was chiefly to obviate the impression made by them, and to preserve purity of faith in the heathen converts, that the apostle wrote this and its concomitant epistles to the Ephesians and Philippians. At any rate, the advice is addressed to those who were disposed to impose Jewish rites upon themselves or others.

¹ *In the world.*] “under the Jewish dispensation, ver. 8.” Newcome.

² *Imposing upon yourselves.*] See Wakefield and Macknight. “Why do ye still dogmatize? i. e. require compliance with the injunctions of the law?” Peirce.

³ *Eat not.*] *μη ἀψῆ.* Mr. Wakefield refers to 2 Cor. vi. 17, as a passage in which the word bears the same sense. Dr. Harwood confirms it by passages from Diogenes Laertius and Opi- pian, and Schleusner by the authority of Xenophon and Homer. Dr. Doddridge observes, “that the quick succession of these precepts, without any copulatives between, happily expresses the eagerness with which the seducing teachers inculcated those things.” Kypke and others observe a climax in the apostle’s words, “do not eat, do not taste, do not touch.”

⁴ *All which meats.*] In this interpretation of the clause I agree with Peirce, Newcome, Rosenmuller, and others. “*Sensus est, hi omnes cibi, tantum abest ut polluant vescentem, ut potius ipso usu pereant, et conficiantur.*” Rosenmuller. “All these things are to be consumed by a temperate use of them.” Peirce. *ἀποχρησεῖ* is wanting in the Æthiopic, and omitted by Wakefield. “It denotes the use of such things as are consumed in using, in opposition to the use of such as are not consumed; viz. houses, land,” &c. Bowyer.

⁵ *Doctrines of men.*] The Jewish sectaries, the Pharisees, Essenes, &c. carried their traditional precepts far beyond the rigour of the written law. To these the apostle appears to allude, rather than to the Pythagorean precepts, as Macknight supposes; or to the worship of angels, which is Peirce’s opinion, and in which Newcome follows him. Perhaps he includes all the extravagances of the Essene opinions. “*Videtur Paulus non simpliciter contra Judæos, Mosis legem defendentes disputare, adeo contemptim de opinionibus eorum loquitur; sed, contra Judæos magnam vanarum opinionum copiam, ad Mosis legem, adsciscentes.*” Rosenmuller.

⁶ *Which, having, &c.*] This verse is obscure; but by the punctuation suggested by Peirce and others, the sense is made plain. Include in a parenthesis from *λογον* to *σωματος*, and place a comma after *τινι*, supplying the adversative particle *ἀλλὰ* before *προς*. “Which precepts, though pretending to wisdom, are not in any estimation, but serve to satisfy the flesh.” See Peirce, Newcome, Griesbach, and Barrington *apud* Bowyer.

⁷ *Pretence of wisdom.*] *λογον* amongst many other senses of this word, Schleusner gives the following, which he supports by authorities from Chrysostom, Sophocles, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus: “*Species apparens, et externa alicujus rei, quæ rei ipsi et veritati opponitur.*” The Essenes, who are here probably alluded to, pretended to be adepts in a superior and sublime philosophy. See Peirce, and Prideaux’s *Connexion*, part ii. book v. p. 343—361. 8vo. Also Joseph. *Antiq.* l. xviii. 2. *De Bell. Jud.* ii. 7.

⁸ *Will-worship.*] worship of angels; compare ver. 18.

⁹ *In no estimation.*] “*ἐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι*” *τιμῇ* signifies both *honour* and *profit*.” Peirce.

¹⁰ *Gratification of the flesh.*] “Gratifying persons of a fleshly or Jewish disposition, ver. 18.” Peirce. The word *flesh*, in the apostle’s writings, is continually used for the *law*, in opposition to *spirit*, which signifies the *gospel*. See Rom. viii. 4—8.

Remember, my brethren, that by your baptismal profession you are dead, not only to a state of heathenism, but of Judaism also; and that you have no more concern with the ritual law than a dead man with the living world. Why, then, do you disgrace the gospel by acting as if you were living under the Jewish polity, and subject to all the burdensome rites, not only of Moses, but of the Jewish sectaries? Why do you impose upon yourselves and others harsh restrictions concerning different kinds of food? do not eat this, do not taste that, do not touch the other? Be assured that the gospel pronounces all the creatures of God to be equally good, equally lawful; and its generous spirit disdains to prescribe any rules concerning articles of diet and daily consumption, but those of temperance and gratitude. Nor indeed did the law of Moses itself extend to those burdensome restrictions which the Jewish sectaries now prescribe. They are mere human inventions and impositions, of no authority whatever, even in respect to Jews, much less with regard to Christians. They are indeed proposed to you under the specious form of a sublime philosophy, of a superior wisdom; which enjoins a purity and perfection of worship beyond what the law of God itself requires; which promotes humility and self-abasement; and which recommends itself to God by voluntary austerities, and severe corporal abstinences and penances. But all this voluntary service and mortification is irrational and unauthorized. It is of no account in the sight of God, and of no practical or moral use to the misguided man who submits to it. And it is but too true that many who make the loudest pretensions to mortification and humility, and who are most rigorous in ceremonial services, are prompted to it by spiritual pride, and an absurd opinion that, by such practices, they shall attain a peculiar share of the divine favour, while they neglect the proper duties of life.

Ch. II.
Ver. 23.

7. As risen with Christ to a new life, the apostle exhorts them to act up to the free and liberal spirit of the gospel, in full assurance of an ultimate and everlasting reward, ch. iii. ver. 1—4.

Seeing¹¹, therefore, that ye have been raised up with Christ, seek those things which are above¹², where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God¹³. Set your minds¹⁴ on things above, not on those on the earth.

Ch. III.
Ver. 1.
2.

¹¹ *Seeing, &c.*] Compare ch. ii. 20. As dead, they were to renounce all expectation from rites of the law: as raised to life, they were to act conformably to the principles and expectations of the gospel. See ch. ii. 12.

¹² *Things which are above.*] Calvin justly understands this of the sublimer parts of Christianity, as opposed to Jewish ceremonies and rudiments of the world. See Doddridge on the

Ch. III.
Ver. 2.

As by your baptismal immersion you are dead and buried to the heathen and the Jewish state, and to all their laws and rules; so by your return from that ordinance you are figuratively raised with Christ to another life, you are introduced by your profession of Christianity into a new world; you are become members of that holy community of which Jesus is the exalted chief; you are introduced into new connexions, new privileges, and new expectations, and are subject to new laws. You are, in a manner, translated from earth to heaven. Let your whole conduct, therefore, be worthy of your exalted situation; and behave in all respects as becomes members of that community over which Christ is appointed by God to exercise supreme authority. Let me press it upon you to practise and to devote yourselves wholly to the moral duties of your Christian profession, and to pay no attention whatsoever to Jewish rites. To you they are as insignificant and worthless as the toys of earth to an inhabitant of heaven.

3. *For ye have died¹, and your life is treasured up² with Christ in God.*
4. *When Christ, who is your life, shall be manifested, then ye also shall be manifested with him in glory.*

text. It is plain that the apostle, by things *above*, means that superior state into which we are introduced by Christ, *i. e.* the gospel dispensation.

¹³ *Where Christ, &c.]* This expression has misled expositors to imagine that the apostle is here alluding to a local heaven. Whereas the expression, *sitting at the right hand of God*, can mean nothing more than advancement to great dignity in the church, of which Christ is appointed by God to be Lord and Head.

¹⁴ *Set your minds, &c.]* *ὑποτασσέσθε*, an advance upon *ὑπακούετε* in the preceding verse. *Things on earth*: "such poor matters as meats and drinks." Peirce. This ingenious expositor perceived that "things on earth" signified the "requisitions of the law;" but it does not appear to have occurred to him that its opposite, "things above," must therefore signify "the precepts and the spirit of the gospel."

¹ *Ye have died.]* See Gal. ii. 20, where the same thought occurs. Christians are dead to all expectations from the world, and from the law; yet they possess a life with Christ; they are raised with him to a life of holiness, and to the hope of immortal life. This life is treasured up in God; secure in his purpose and promise. It is also concealed; for the blessings promised are not known to the world, nor even to believers themselves. But the time will come when the divine purpose shall be made manifest. Christ, their life, the preacher of life, whose resurrection is the proof and pledge of theirs, and who is their living head, whose life is inseparably connected with theirs, shall appear to fulfill his glorious mission, and then they shall be publicly manifested as the heirs of immortal happiness.

² *Treasured up.]* "laid up in store with Christ in God: as in a store-room, ready for future use. *κεκρυπται* is equivalent to *τεθησαυρισται*. See Col. ii. 3; Matt. xiii. 44; 2 Tim. i. 12. Hence light is thrown upon Luke xx. 38, Matt. vi. 1." Wakefield. Newcome observes, that "*κεκρυπται*, ver. 3, is opposed to *φανερῶθη*, ver. 4; and is explained by it *q. d.* as Christ is invisibly with God, so your life is with God, concealed, deposited, or treasured up with him, to be bestowed on you in his good time." "The life of the Christian," says Dr. Doddridge, "is here represented as an invaluable jewel, and under a double security, secure as the abode of Christ with the Father, or, as the fidelity and immutability of the Father himself could make it."—ver. 4. *your life*: this is the reading of the Ephrem and other MSS. The received text reads *ἡμῶν*, *our*.

And why, my brethren, am I so much in earnest in urging you to neglect ceremonial services, and to confine your attention to the moral duties of the gospel? It is because you have no concern whatever with the Jewish institutes. You are, by the profession of Christianity, become dead to all expectation of benefit by a ritual service. Nevertheless you live: you have entered upon a new and glorious life; a life of holiness, and faith, and virtue here, preparatory for, and introductory to, a life of happiness hereafter. This life is treasured up in God, in his purposes, his councils, and his promises; it is at present concealed; it does not yet appear what we shall be. And though you will shortly moulder in the dust, you will still live with Christ, your instructor, your fore-runner, and your pledge of immortality. His renewed life is the security for yours. Nor shall this great distinction remain for ever veiled in obscurity. When the appointed season arrives, Christ, your Redeemer from the grave, shall appear in his own and his Father's glory, to raise the dead and to judge the world. Then shall you be publicly acknowledged by him as his faithful and approved disciples, and be admitted to share with him in his glorious and everlasting triumph.

Ch. III.
Ver. 4.

PART THE SECOND.

THE APOSTLE IN THE PRACTICAL PART OF THE EPISTLE INSISTS UPON PERSONAL DUTIES, UPON THE DUTIES WHICH CHRISTIANS OWE TO EACH OTHER, UPON RELATIVE DUTIES, AND FINALLY, UPON THE CONDUCT WHICH OUGHT TO BE OBSERVED TO UNBELIEVERS. Ch. iii. 5—iv. 6.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE presses the duty of self-government, and the indispensable necessity of utterly forsaking the vices of their former heathen state.
Ch. iii. 5—7.

Put to death³, therefore, your members, which were upon the earth⁴,

5.

³ Put to death.] So Macknight. *Mortify* is always used in a figurative sense, and does not convey the apostle's idea. The heathen *self* is supposed to be dead by the profession of Christianity; if, however, there should be in any of its members any remains of life, they are to be

Ch. III. *fornication, impurity, disorderly passion, evil desire, and exorbitant lewd-*
Ver. 5. *ness, which is idolatry*¹.

I have said that, by the profession of Christianity, you are become new creatures, and have entered into a new world. Your former persons, your heathen selves, are dead. It is, however, possible that some parts or limbs of this former self may not be quite extinct, but may still possess life and motion. If this be the case, I strictly charge you to put them to death without delay and without reserve. The meaning of this allegory, I doubt not, you well understand. The impure abominable rites of heathenism were intended and calculated to inflame the passions. The most odious debaucheries often constituted a part of idolatrous worship. These crimes are strictly prohibited by the Christian law; all tendency to them must be guarded against with the utmost vigilance and resolution: and all irregular affections must be completely suppressed.

6. *For which the anger of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience*²;
7. *in which ye also formerly walked when ye lived among them.*

These criminal excesses are highly offensive in the sight of God, and he will in due time manifest his displeasure by overturning the heathen idolatry from its foundations. But if he is justly incensed against the uninstructed and unconverted heathen on this account, how much more offensive must such conduct be in professing Christians! Nor will you think my caution useless, when you recollect that many of you, while in your heathen state, were as culpable in these respects as others.

resolutely put to death. By this the apostle means, that if any of those disorderly passions, those impure affections, which were not only tolerated but encouraged by heathen idolatry, and to which the Colossians themselves had been addicted in their unconverted state, remained in their hearts, they must resolutely resist and exterminate them, as absolutely inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity.

¹ *Which were upon the earth:*] i. e. which belonged to you in your heathen state. You are now raised to life with Christ, and elevated with him to an upper region. See ver. 1, 2.

² *Exorbitant lewdness, which is idolatry.*] *πλεονεξία* that this word is used in the writings of the apostle for those abominable impurities to which the heathen were so notoriously addicted, is sufficiently proved by Mr. Locke, after Dr. Hammond, in his note upon Eph. iv. 19, which is quoted at length by Peirce. Mr. Wakefield translates it "inordinate desire." It is called idolatry, as being authorized and countenanced by the rites and practices of idolatrous nations. The infamous state of the Gentile world in this respect is well known, and is strongly and justly represented by the apostle, Rom. i.

³ *Sons of disobedience:*] i. e. the heathen, who were disobedient, not only to the gospel revelation, but to the light and law of nature, Rom. i. 20—28. The anger of God, which is here denounced, may signify the calamities which were impending over the Roman empire; but more probably the utter extermination of the then prevailing system of heathen superstition, by the success of the Christian religion.

SECTION II.

THE APOSTLE insists upon the duties which believers owe to each other.

Ch. iii. 8—17.

1. He cautions them against giving way to intemperate passion; and to abstain from falsehood and deceit, ver. 8—11. Ch. III.

But now, do ye also lay aside all these: anger, animosity, malice, evil-speaking, reproachful words³ from your mouth. Ver. 8.

As it is your duty to maintain the strictest government over your appetites and passions, so likewise you are required to set a guard upon your tempers. You are not to imagine, as the heathen do, that you are at liberty to indulge implacable animosity, resentment, and rage, for every offence, and to give vent to your angry and malignant passions in calumnious and reproachful language. Such a conduct as this would be a disgrace to your profession.

Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man⁴ with his practices, and have put on the new man; who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of his creator⁵. 9.
10.

Let no consideration induce you to utter a wilful falsehood with an intention to deceive and injure others. How innocent soever such conduct may be deemed among ignorant heathen, it is utterly inadmissible among professing Christians. Remember, you are dead to your old heathen state, and by embracing the doctrine of Christ you are become new persons, living in a new state, possessing new apprehensions and feelings, subject to new

³ *Reproachful words.*] *αἰσχρολογία*. Dr. Whitby observes, from Hesychius, Phavorinus, and Julius Pollux, that the word is used in this sense; which also best suits the connexion. It is generally rendered *filthy talking* or *conversation*, and is understood as a prohibition of all licentious discourse. See Eph. iv. 29.

⁴ *The old man, &c.*] *i. e.* your heathen state, your former self, with his deeds, and particularly the habit of *lying*. Many of the philosophers thought lying lawful when it was profitable. See Leland on the *Necessity of the Christian Revelation*, vol. ii. p. 219, 220.

⁵ *The new man, &c.*] Your Christian state; your new self. New in all respects: particularly as to the knowledge of right and wrong. *According to the image of his creator*: *i. e.* Jesus Christ. See Col. i. 16. Believers by the new creation are formed after the image of Christ their creator, as man was originally formed after the image of God in the natural creation. Gen. i. 26, 27.

Ch. III.
Ver. 10.

laws, and influenced by new views and hopes. You are created anew by Jesus Christ, and you bear the stamp and image of your Creator. And particularly you resemble him in knowledge, and in the power of discriminating justly between right and wrong, so as not to be in danger of confounding good and evil like your heathen neighbours; who are involved in the most pernicious errors upon moral subjects. You, I say, are of that new creation,

11. *Wherein there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free-man, but Christ is all and in all*¹.

In this new state into which you are introduced by the gospel, all ceremonial and civil distinctions are overlooked. The believing Gentile is as acceptable to God as the believing Jew; the barbarian has the same title to the privileges of the gospel as the polite, and the Christian slave as the Christian free-man. In a word, the only circumstance of any importance in this new state into which believers are introduced is, their resemblance to Christ in all the excellencies of his character. In proportion as they bear his image, they are entitled to participate in his glory.

2. The apostle earnestly recommends the practice of various social virtues, and particularly the exercise of a gentle and forgiving spirit, ver. 12—15.

12. *Put on*², *therefore, as chosen, holy, and beloved of God*³, *the tenderest*
13. *pity*⁴, *kindness*⁵, *humility of mind, meekness, long-suffering, (bearing with*

¹ *Christ is all, and in all.*] Christ, *i. e.* a resemblance to Christ, *is all*, *i. e.* is the only thing attended to: *in all*, *i. e.* in all believers, of whatsoever rank, profession, or country. The only qualification necessary for a participation of the blessings of the gospel is Christ, a belief of his doctrine, and a conformity to his image. All other distinctions, whether ceremonial or civil, are in this view of no use. Hence we see how very frivolous and inconclusive the argument is which is drawn from this text to prove that Christ is truly God: viz. that he is here called *all and in all*; and that the same words are applied to God, 1 Cor. xv. 28, that God may be all in all. The expressions in the two passages are used in senses widely different. The same mode of reasoning would prove Adam to be God; for he was the Father of all mankind, and so likewise is God.

² *Put on, &c.*] The heathen man, the former self, being dead, his garments also were to be laid aside, viz. *anger, wrath, &c.* ver. 8, 9; *i. e.* the vices of the heathen state. And the *new man*, the Christian self, the image of Christ, being assumed, a becoming dress must be put on with it, such as *pity, kindness, and the other virtues of the Christian character*; which are all to be made fast with the girdle of love. Gal. iii. 27.

³ *Chosen, &c.*] These are epithets which express their present privileged and Christian state as distinguished from their former state of heathenism when they were excluded from the privileges of God's professing people. They were *chosen* by God from the rest of the heathen world; they were *holy*, as being separated from the rest of mankind by their profession of Christianity: they were *beloved*, as being favoured with peculiar privileges. See Taylor's *Key to the Romans*.

⁴ *Tenderest pity.*] In the Greek, "bowels of pity." See Macknight.

each other, and freely forgiving each other if any one have a complaint against another, even as the Lord freely forgave⁶ you, so also do ye,) and over all these put on love, which is the band of perfection⁷. Ch. III. Ver. 14.

In your new created state, if you all bear the image of Christ in profession and spirit, you are all equally dear to God, whatever your previous local, civil, or ceremonial distinctions may have been; and you are all equally entitled to those high and honourable epithets which were once limited to the chosen descendants of Abraham. But in your new state you must also wear a new dress: instead of clothing yourselves in robes of anger, resentment, and revenge, when any injury has been received, or apprehended, you must, as the chosen servants of God, put on the garments of pity, of kindness, of forbearance and forgiveness; bearing with each others infirmities and imperfections. And even where offence has been wantonly given, you ought to be ready to forgive the penitent offender without always waiting for complete compensation for the injury received: in this respect imitating the great example of God himself, who has gratuitously, and without any solicitation on your part, overlooked the sins of your heathen state, and imparted to you the inestimable blessings of the gospel. Let this illustrious instance of divine mercy be the model of your conduct. And finally, let the social virtues be bound to your heart by the cincture of love; of love, which comprehends in itself all social duty, and is the great bond of union among the disciples of Christ.

And let the peace of Christ⁸, unto which ye have been called in one body, preside⁹ in your hearts; and be thankful. 15.

⁵ Kindness.] *χρηστοτητα* “properly signifies,” says Dr. Macknight, “that sweetness of disposition which leads men to comply with the innocent inclinations of others, and to speak to them courteously.”

⁶ The Lord freely forgave.] The Alexandrine and Clermont manuscripts, and the Italic and Vulgate versions, read *Κυριος* instead of *Χριστος*. God is said to have freely forgiven the sins of their heathen state, by having gratuitously admitted them to a participation of the privileges of the gospel, upon the profession of their faith in Christ. This, in the apostle's language, is being justified freely by his grace. Rom. iii. 24. This seems to indicate, that Christians are not to wait till overtures of reconciliation are made by the offending party; but, though justly offended, to be the first in proposing offers of peace.

⁷ Over all these, &c.] Love is the Christian's girdle. See Macknight. *Τελειοι* are perfect Christians; believers eminent in knowledge and virtue: see 1 Cor. ii. 6; Eph. iv. 13; Col. i. 28, iv. 12: *τελειοτης*, therefore, is that which constitutes perfection, viz. the virtues of the Christian character. Love is the band of these virtues: it comprehends them all. When love exists, no other social virtue will be wanting. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Rom. xiii. 10. The Clermont and some other copies read *ενατητος*. Love is the band of unity: it is this which preserves harmony and union among the different members of the Christian church. See Schleusner and Griesbach. This sense does not seem quite so well to suit the connexion, where love is represented as the girdle of the Christian dress, binding together the various articles of which it is composed.

⁸ Peace of Christ.] *Χριστος*. Such is the reading of the Alexandrine and other approved ed-

Ch. III.
Ver. 15.

Let that peace which you enjoy as members of Christ's mystical body, peace with God, and reconciliation to each other, animate you to live at peace one with another, and to love each other. Let mutual love and harmony be the great prize of your holy and Christian ambition: and maintain a thankful spirit for the blessings which you enjoy by the gospel revelation.

3. The apostle further recommends a cheerful, thankful, pious spirit as the best evidence of an intimate knowledge of the gospel, ver. 16, 17.

16. *Let the doctrine of Christ dwell in you richly¹. With all wisdom teaching and admonishing yourselves² by psalms, and hymns, and spiritual odes³; singing with thankfulness⁴ in your hearts to God⁵.*

Study the instructions of Christ with attention suited to their importance; and make yourselves very familiar, both with the precepts and the doctrines of Christianity. And in this view you will find it of great advantage to commit to memory psalms and hymns and other pious poetical compositions which are easily remembered and recollected, and which convey important truths in impressive language. These impressions will also be more permanent and useful, if the repetition of the words is accompanied with music vocal or instrumental. Only let me remind you, that when you sing you must exercise devout affections; and particularly, a grateful spirit, without which the most sublime language accompanied with the most exquisite harmony would be nothing more than a contemptible jargon of unmeaning sounds.

pies, which is adopted by Griesbach, Newcome, and Wakefield. *The peace of Christ* is that state of peace with God and with each other into which we have been introduced by Christ. See Eph. ii. 14—16. This peace is accomplished by uniting all believers in one body, of which Christ is the head. Eph. iv. 4.

⁹ *Preside in your hearts.*] *βραβεύω* is, to assign the prize to the conqueror in the games, and in general, to *preside* or *rule*. The apostle's advice is, that they should act by their fellow-Christians consistently with that state of harmony and concord into which they have been introduced by Christ.

¹ *Richly.*] I follow the punctuation of Griesbach and Macknight.

² *Yourselves.*] *ἑαυτοῖς*. So Wakefield. "one another." Newcome. "yourselves and others." Macknight.

³ *Psalms, &c.*] It is not easy to distinguish the different kinds of poems to which the apostle alludes. See Eph. v. 19. Dr. Macknight says that *ὠδαί*, *odes*, are poems which were composed to be sung with a lyre or other musical instrument.

⁴ *With thankfulness.*] *ἐν χαρίτι*. See Wakefield and Newcome. Rom. vi. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 57; 2 Cor. ii. 14.

⁵ *To God.*] *Θεῷ*. This is the reading of the most approved manuscripts and versions. See Griesbach and Newcome.

*And whatsoever ye say or do*⁶, *do all in the name of Jesus Christ*⁷; *giving thanks to God, even the Father, through him.* Ch. III. Ver. 17.

To conclude: I earnestly press it upon you, in every state and circumstance of life to act agreeably to your Christian profession; in obedience to the authority, and in conformity to the example, of your master Jesus: and, like his, let your whole lives be a continued act of devotion, and an uninterrupted expression of gratitude to God.

SECTION III.

THE APOSTLE briefly insists upon relative duties. Ch. iii. 18—iv. i.

1. He urges the duties of the conjugal relation, ver. 18, 19.

*Wives, be subject*⁸ *to your husbands, as it is fit in the Lord*⁹. *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter toward them.* 18, 19.

Let Christian wives yield that deference to their unbelieving husbands which the laws and customs of society require: for such conduct is highly agreeable to the principles of the Christian religion, which, whatever change it may introduce into men's moral state, makes no alteration in their civil relations. And let Christian husbands behave kindly and tenderly to their unbelieving wives; and not think themselves authorized to deal harshly with them because they have not yet embraced the faith of Christ.

2. He states the duties of children and parents, ver. 20, 21.

*Children, obey your parents in all things*¹⁰; *for this is acceptable in* 20.

⁶ *Say or do*:] this is Mr. Wakefield's version.

⁷ *Jesus Christ*.] Such is the reading of most of the ancient copies. The received text reads, "Lord Jesus." See Griesbach. "Let your whole minds be occupied by Christian sentiments. Let your great object be to recommend the principles of your religion to others, by acting upon them yourselves; and always consider yourselves as under the greatest obligation to God for this invaluable gift." Dr. Priestley.

⁸ *Wives, be subject, &c.*] Dr. Chandler has satisfactorily shown that the precepts concerning relative duties Eph. v. 22 *et seq.* evidently relate to persons of different religions; and as these are a brief recapitulation of the same advices, there can be no doubt that they relate to persons in the same circumstances. The apostle might not think it necessary to insist more particularly upon the subject, as he directs the Colossians to send for and to read the other epistle in the church. See ver. 16.

⁹ *It is fit in the Lord*.] "In the Lord. Among those who are Christians." Newcome.

¹⁰ *In all things*.] Christianity does not diminish that authority which the laws and customs

Ch. III. *the Lord*¹. *Fathers, do not irritate*² *your children, lest they be discour-*
Ver. 21. *aged.*

Let not the believing children of unbelieving parents imagine that the profession of Christianity releases them from the obligation of filial duty; but let them be assured that they are then acting a part most acceptable to God and most suitable to their Christian profession, when they yield that entire subjection to paternal authority which the established order of society requires, and even excel others in filial duty, where the superior obligations of religion do not interfere.

And let not believing parents animadvert with too much severity upon the errors and the faults of their unconverted children, lest young persons often and harshly reprov'd, and despairing of coming up to that high standard of perfection which the parent has established, should be tempted to throw off every restraint, and to abandon themselves to vice and ruin.

3. He insists more particularly upon the duties of servants and masters, ver. 22—iv. 1.

22. *Bond-servants, obey your earthly masters*³ *in all things; not with eye-*
23. *service as men-pleasers, but with simplicity of heart revering the Lord*⁴; *and*
24. *whatsoever ye are employed in, perform it from the soul*⁵ *as to the Lord, and*
25. *not to men; knowing that from the Lord ye will receive the reward of the*
*inheritance, for Christ indeed is the master whom ye are serving*⁶. *More-*

of the country have placed in the hands of the parent. An exception, however, must be made to those precepts which are plainly repugnant to the laws of God.

¹ *Acceptable in the Lord.*] *εὐ Κυρίῳ* is the true reading. See ver. 18, and Griesbach.

² *Irritate.*] *παροργίζετε* is the reading of the most authentic copies. See Griesbach.

³ *Earthly masters.*] In the original, "masters according to the flesh." "*temporal masters.*" Dr. Harwood. The apostle is evidently addressing himself to the Christian servants, or rather slaves, of unbelieving masters; who probably might believe, and by their false teachers be told, that being emancipated from all former connexions by faith in Christ, they were no further bound to obey their masters than while they were under their immediate inspection and in danger of punishment for neglect of duty; but that they were at perfect liberty to neglect their master's service if they could do it with impunity. The apostle teaches them that the profession of Christianity relaxed no civil obligations; that obedience to their masters was a duty they owed to Christ; and that, however unjust or oppressive the conduct of their masters might be, it was their duty to be faithful and active in their service, whether under their master's eye, or not, and to look for their reward in a future life. See Eph. vi. 5—8, and Chandler's notes.

⁴ *Revering the Lord.*] *τοῦ Κυρίου* is the true reading: the received text reads "God." See Griesbach. Simplicity of heart in the preceding clause is opposed to that double-dealing for which slaves were remarkable.

⁵ *From the soul.*] See Wakefield. *ἐκ ψυχῆς*. Comp. Eph. vi. 6.

⁶ *For Christ indeed, &c.*] This is Mr. Wakefield's version, and expresses accurately the true meaning of the apostle.

*over, he that doeth wrong shall suffer for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons*⁷. Ch. III.
Ver. 25.

I must be a little more particular in my advice to Christian slaves, who, having been regenerated into that new creation in which in a moral view there is no distinction but what arises from real worth, may be inclined to believe, and are indeed by their false teachers instructed, that they are released from all obligation to serve heathen masters; and that they are in duty bound to do nothing more than what they are compelled to do under their master's eye. Let me assure you, that these principles are very remote from the spirit of the gospel; which enforces all civil duties by new and most efficacious motives.

Instead, therefore, of neglecting the service of your heathen masters, I call upon you to obey them with alacrity in all their lawful commands: and that not only when their eye is upon you, and from a desire to recommend yourselves to them, but perform your work honestly as a Christian duty, and from regard to the authority of Christ. Do all that is required of you, and do it cheerfully; as if you were working, not for an earthly master, but for Christ himself. In a word, always consider yourselves as the servants of Christ; and whatever you are ordered to do, do it with the same alertness and zeal as if Christ had given you the command. For he is your true master; and whether your heathen masters reward you or not, he will give you ample recompense for your fidelity, and will admit you to the relation and privileges of children in the great family of which he is the head. But on the contrary, if any one neglects his proper duty, and under any pretence whatever does injury to another, he shall certainly suffer condign punishment from his impartial judge; whether he be a believer or an unbeliever, a master or a slave.

*Masters, give unto your bond-servants what is just and equitable*⁸, *knowing that ye also have a master in heaven*. Ch. IV.
Ver. 1.

Christian masters, see to it that ye do not treat your heathen slaves as if they were not entitled to common humanity and common justice. Require nothing from them but what is reasonable, and give them the encouragement and recompense which is their due. Remember that you are by profession the servants of Christ; and though he is now invisible, he will an-

⁷ *No respect of persons.*] This observation is applied to the conduct of masters Eph. vi. 9.

⁸ *Just and equitable.*] το δίκαιον, και την ισοτητα. Comp. Eph. vi. 9. τα αυτα ποιειτε, do the same things.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 1.

other day appear in judgement, and as you have acted by your slaves and dependants, so you may justly expect to be treated by your Master when he comes,

SECTION IV.

THE APOSTLE recommends piety and devotion towards God, and prudence in their conduct towards their heathen neighbours. Ch. iv. 2—6.

1. The apostle recommends prayer and thanksgiving, and desires an interest in their intercessions, ver. 2—4.

- 2, 3. *Persevere in prayer¹, and watch therein with thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door of utterance²,*
4. *to declare the mystery of Christ, for which indeed I am in bonds³, that I may make it manifest by speaking as I ought⁴.*

You are in the midst of dangers, and surrounded by temptations, either

¹ *Persevere in prayer, &c.]* From the connexion in which this exhortation is introduced, Mr. Peirce argues that the apostle had a particular reference to the perilous circumstances of Christians at that time. This observation is corroborated by comparing this passage with its parallel, Eph. vi. 18—20. "The duty of prayer," says Dr. Priestley, "is constantly urged upon Christians: and to have God continually in our thoughts, in which state of mind it will be impossible not to address ourselves to him in thanksgiving and petition, is the great object of all the means of religion. When we have attained to this habitual devotion, so that, as the Psalmist says, God shall be in all our thoughts, we shall be prepared for all the events of life, and secure against all temptations to sin. And without this habitual devotion, or constant regard to the presence and government of God in all our actions, all the prescribed means of religion signify nothing."

² *A door of utterance.]* *ὑπὸν τὴν λόγον*, a door for the word. Wakefield and Macknight. i. e. a favourable opportunity of preaching the gospel with success; and that he would remove every obstruction out of the way. The former signification best agrees with the corresponding passage Eph. vi. 19. q. d. "a large opportunity of declaring the mystery of the gospel to the Gentiles, and their equal participation of its privileges with the Jews." Newcome.

"It is very observable," says Dr. Priestley, "that all the apostle wished for from the prayers of his friends was, his having a more open field for preaching the gospel. This appears to have been his only great object: to life or death he seems to have been indifferent. Could such a man as this, whose epistles are so much the language of nature, be an impostor, carrying on some artful design, the object of which must have been his interest or fame? They know nothing of human nature, or the natural expressions of human sentiments, who can suspect any such thing."

³ *The mystery of Christ, &c.]* This mystery was the admission of the Gentiles into the church, Eph. iii. 8, 9. For preaching this doctrine the apostle was arrested at Jerusalem, and sent a prisoner to Rome.

⁴ *Speaking as I ought.]* So Wakefield. Gr. "as it behoves me to speak." "That I may declare it as plainly and fully as it becomes me to do, who have been so peculiarly intrusted with the revelation of it, and a commission to preach it." Peirce.

to corrupt the doctrine or to desert the profession of Christianity; pray, therefore, to be preserved from apostasy, and as your dangers are incessant, let your prayers be constant; and amidst the business and avocations of life, watch for and embrace every favourable opportunity for this purpose. And let your prayers for perseverance be joined with devout thanksgivings for the blessings and privileges of the gospel.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 4.

And in your prayers, as a testimony of affection, remember me, and pray for me that God would grant me an opportunity to preach the gospel, and to make known that gracious purpose which was so long concealed in the counsels of heaven, that the Gentiles should be admitted to the privileges of the chosen people. A glorious discovery, for bearing testimony to which I am now in bonds. But so far am I from being discouraged by persecution, that I request your prayers to be united with those of other churches for my release for no other purpose, but that I may be more at liberty to publish the joyful tidings with a zeal and activity worthy of the cause, and of the unspeakable obligation I am under to him by whose mercy I was selected and commissioned for this important embassy.

2. The apostle recommends prudence in conduct and conversation towards their unbelieving neighbours, ver. 5, 6.

*Behave wisely towards those that are without*⁵; thus *gaining time*⁶. 5.

*Let your conversation be always courteous*⁷, *seasoned with discretion*⁸, *that ye may know how ye ought to answer every one*⁹. 6.

Be prudent in your conduct towards your heathen neighbours,; and do not by any impropriety of behaviour, and particularly by acting as though, by the profession of Christianity, you were released from the obligation of

⁵ *Those that are without*:] i. e. "the unconverted heathen." Newcome.

⁶ *Gaining time*.] See Dan. ii. 8, LXX. Eph. v. 15, 16. "gaining as much as you can, prolonging your own tranquillity, and the opportunity of spreading the gospel." Peirce.

⁷ *Courteous*.] *εὐχαρίστητος*. "well-pleasing, mild, becoming, good, making you gracious to and favoured by your hearers." Newcome. See Peirce on ch. iii. 17.

⁸ *Discretion*.] In the original, *salt*. Mr. Peirce observes, that "salt is put for wisdom both in sacred and profane authors."

⁹ *That ye may know, &c.*] Mr. Peirce supposes that the apostle here has particular respect to the heathen magistrates, who had it in their power to call them in question for their religion. See 1 Pet. iii. 15. But it does not seem necessary to limit the apostle's advice to this case. Mr. Wakefield's version is, "knowing the proper answer for every person." "This," says Dr. Priestley, "is an admonition to avoid whatever is offensive, and to study whatever is civil and agreeable in conversation; and also that address which will qualify a man to defend his principles, whether they be attacked by argument or ridicule. Good sense is never employed to more advantage than in this way. And to persons who see much of the world, there is continual occasion for it."

Ch. IV.
Ver. 6.

social duties, give any unnecessary offence. Your principles are themselves sufficiently obnoxious; and let your conduct be ever so correct and benevolent, they will probably, some time or other, expose you to persecution; but circumspection and an inoffensive behaviour will delay the storm, and prolong the season of security and tranquillity.

Do not excite prejudice by unguarded and unbecoming language. Be courteous, be discreet: observe the characters and manners of those with whom you associate; and, without sacrificing your principles, or your integrity, endeavour so to adapt your conversation to your company, that none may be disgusted, and that, if possible, all may be pleased, instructed, and edified.

CONCLUSION.

THE APOSTLE expresses his solicitude that the Colossian Christians should be informed of his present situation, for which purpose he sends Tychicus to visit them. He closes his epistle with salutations and a benediction.
Ch. iv. 7—19.

1. The apostle refers the Colossians to Tychicus and Onesimus for a complete account of his affairs, ver. 7—9.

7. *Tychicus*¹, that beloved brother and faithful minister, and my fellow-
8. *servant in the Lord, will make known to you all things concerning me; whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that ye might know our situation*²,
9. *and that he might comfort your hearts: together with Onesimus, that faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you*³, they will inform you concerning all affairs here.

¹ *Tychicus.*] Tychicus was one of the Christian evangelists who accompanied the apostle in his travels, and who now ministered to him in his imprisonment. He and Onesimus were commissioned by the apostle to carry his epistles to the Ephesians or Laodiceans, vi. 21, 22, to the Colossians, and to Philemon; and to communicate all the intelligence respecting himself and his affairs at Rome, which his friends might be desirous to hear. *In the Lord, i. e.* "under our common Lord, in the church of Christ." Newcome.

² *That ye might know, &c.*] *ἵνα γνῶτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν.* This is the reading of the Alexandrine and other manuscripts, and literally coincides with Eph. vi. 22. It is marked as of good authority by Griesbach, and adopted by Dr. Harwood.

³ *Onesimus—one of you.*] He was the fugitive slave of Philemon, an inhabitant of Colossæ; he had been converted to Christianity by the apostle at Rome, and was now sent back to his master with a letter of recommendation from the apostle. The apostle, no doubt, ordered Onesimus first to deliver his epistle to Philemon, and presumed upon the success of his intercession, before he would allow him to join with Tychicus in delivering the epistle to the Colossians.

Indeed

I know, my brethren, that you are under great solicitude on my account, and perhaps you apprehend my situation to be more inconvenient and hazardous than it really is. To alleviate your anxiety, therefore, and to comfort your spirits, I have sent Tychicus, my beloved fellow-Christian, and my faithful fellow-labourer in the gospel ministry, to represent to you the exact state in which I am. That you may know that, though a prisoner for the cause of truth, I am neither discouraged, nor inactive, nor useless; and that I am not without hope of obtaining a speedy release. And with Tychicus I have sent Onesimus, whom you know as your countryman, and whom I have now the satisfaction to announce to you as your Christian brother; of whose sincerity and faithfulness I have had much experience, and who is dear to me, and will, I trust, be so to you in the bonds of Christian affection. These two excellent men will give you the most satisfactory information concerning me, and the affairs of the believers at Rome.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 9.

2. The apostle sends the salutations of his companions and fellow-labourers, some of whom were also his fellow-sufferers at Rome, ver. 10—14.

*Aristarchus*⁴, my fellow-prisoner, and *Mark*⁵, the nephew of *Barnabas*⁶, concerning whom ye have received instructions, (if he come unto you entertain him,) and *Jesus called Justus*⁷, salute you. These are the only persons who, being of the circumcision, have been my fellow-labourers in the kingdom of God, and have been a comfort to me.

10.

11.

Of these eminent persons, my friends and fellow-labourers who send their salutations to you, one is Aristarchus, to whose merit you are probably no strangers, who has been the companion of my journeys, and of my dangers, both in Thessalonica and Judea, and who is now my fellow-prisoner at

Indeed the epistle to Philemon is so connected with that to the Colossians, that I have taken the liberty of transposing that short epistle and annexing it as an appendix to the other.

⁴ *Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner.*] He was a Macedonian of Thessalonica, Acts xix. 29, xx. 24, but a Jew by descent. He went with St. Paul into Asia, and was seized by the mob at Ephesus. He afterwards accompanied the apostle to Rome, Acts xxvii. 2, where he was his fellow-labourer, (Philem. 24,) and perhaps his fellow-prisoner. See note on ver. 10.

⁵ *Mark.*] This evangelist, though he had formerly deserted the apostle, Acts xiii. 13, and for that reason had been rejected by him as an associate, Acts xv. 38; yet was now perfectly reconciled to him, and held in high estimation by him. See Philem. ver. 24, 2 Tim. iv. 11.

⁶ *Nephew of Barnabas.*] ἀνεψιος; "cousin." Wakefield. "sister's son," in the Public Version, &c. "Aut patruelles, aut amitini, aut consobrini. His tribus vocibus Græca illa vox in Glossis vertitur." Rosenmüller.

⁷ *Jesus called Justus.*] This name had probably been given him at Rome, as sounding less uncouth to a Roman ear than his proper Hebrew name *Jesus*.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 11.

Rome. Another of them is Mark, (the near relation of my first beloved associate Barnabas,) whose timid conduct produced a temporary separation between us, but who has long since resumed his courage and zeal in the cause of truth, and is now one of my most active supporters and best friends. He is soon setting off from hence upon an important mission; if he should come to Colossæ in his way, receive and entertain him with the respect due to his character and office. To the honour of these two enlightened and liberal-minded persons, together with that of Justus, who desires that his name may be united in the salutation with theirs, be it known that, though they are Jews by descent, and strict observers of the law themselves, they are far from being desirous to impose the yoke upon Gentile believers. Being well instructed in the liberal genius and spirit of Christianity, they have cheerfully co-operated with me in preaching the gospel to the heathen, and have comforted and encouraged me in all my difficulties. And to say the truth, they are the only Jewish believers in this place from whom I have derived any assistance, or any consolation; such is the violence of prejudice against me for teaching fully and clearly the liberty of the Gentiles from the yoke of the ceremonial law.

12. *Epaphras*¹, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always earnestly striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in the whole will of God². For I bear him witness that he has a great concern³ for you, and for those in Laodicea, and in Hierapolis.

Epaphras also sends his salutations to you. You know him well as a faithful servant of Christ, by whom many of you were converted to the Christian faith; who diligently and successfully performed the office of a teacher among you when divine Providence restrained me from making you a visit, and employed my labours elsewhere. From him I have lately received the

¹ *Epaphras, one of you.*] He appears to have been a citizen of Colossæ, and to have instructed them in the doctrine of Christ; also from him the apostle received a favourable account of the state of the church in that city. See Col. i. 6—8. In the epistle to Philemon, ver. 23, he is mentioned as *the fellow-prisoner* of the apostle, and Aristarchus not. The Æthiopic version omits the words "my fellow-prisoner," verse 10, to which Mill accedes. See Bowyer. Perhaps that clause should be introduced after Epaphras in this place; for it seems extraordinary that, if Epaphras was in prison, the apostle should not mention it to the Colossians.

² *Whole will of God.*] Peirce observes, that "he has here a respect more especially to that part of the will of God which was so much upon his heart, their maintaining their Christian liberty, and not submitting to Jewish ordinances."

³ *Great concern.*] Griesbach, upon the authority of the Alexandrine and other manuscripts, reads *πολυν πονον*, *great concern*, instead of *πολυν ζηλον*, *great zeal*, which is the reading of the received text. See Newcome.

acceptable tidings of your steadfastness and improvement ; and his zeal and assiduity, even in this place, have endangered his personal safety. Though he cannot personally address you, he still bears you upon his mind, and he earnestly prays for you and for the neighbouring churches in which his labours have been employed, that as you are at present so well informed and so eminently distinguished in faith and virtue, you may firmly adhere to the principles in which you have been instructed, and not suffer yourselves to be corrupted by the artifices of seducing teachers, either in doctrine or in practice.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 13.

Luke⁴ the physician, and beloved brother, and Demas⁵, salute you.

14.

These my brethren and fellow-labourers, who have accompanied me in my missionary journeys, and one of whom has been my faithful companion, my kind friend, during the whole of my long and perilous confinement here, desire me to assure you of their affectionate regards.

3. The apostle sends salutations to Laodicea ; directs that both his epistles be read in both the churches, and gives a solemn charge to Archippus, ver. 15—17.

Salute the brethren that are at Laodicea, and Nymphas⁶, and the church which assembleth in his house. And when this epistle has been read among

15.

16.

⁴ *Luke.*] It is generally allowed that the person here mentioned is Luke the evangelist and historian, and the associate of Paul in his travels and his labours. From comparing this with ver. 11, where the apostle says that he had no fellow-labourer of the circumcision, but those whom he had named, Lord Barrington concludes that Luke was a proselyte of the Gate before he was converted to Christianity ; and Dr. Doddridge thinks it may be fairly concluded that he was not a Jew.

⁵ *Demas.*] If we admit with Dr. Lardner, what appears highly probable, that the second epistle to Timothy was written not long after the apostle's arrival at Rome, it will follow that Demas, whom the apostle in that epistle accuses of deserting him and of going off to Thessalonica, had, like Mark, recovered his courage, returned to Rome, and been received into favour ; and had, with the rest of the brethren, united in sending his salutations to Philemon and the Colossians in those epistles, which were written a short time before the apostle's release. See 2 Tim. iv. 9, 10 ; Philem. ver. 22, 24. It appears from the passage in the epistle to Timothy, that Titus was one who deserted the apostle upon that occasion, leaving him with Luke only for his companion. Nor does it appear that Titus ever returned. Can this be the reason why Luke never mentions the name of Titus in his history ? It is observable that Demas withdrew to Thessalonica, where the distinguished piety and fortitude of the believers, and their marked affection to the apostle, so much extolled by him in his epistles to the Thessalonians, would be very likely to bring the fugitive to himself, to rouse his courage, to rekindle his affection, and to induce him to return to the apostle.

⁶ *Nymphas.*] Of this excellent person, who probably lived at Laodicea, we know nothing but what is here hinted to his honour ; that, being probably like Philemon a person of property, he allowed the Christians at Laodicea to assemble for social worship in his house, as Philemon did those at Colossæ, Philem. ver. 2.

Ch. IV. *you, cause it to be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye*
 Ver. 16. *also read that which ye will receive from Laodicea*¹.

Convey my salutations and kind wishes to the Christians of Laodicea, and particularly to Nymphas, that excellent man, who, in a season of exigency and peril, permits the disciples to assemble for religious worship at his house.

Let the epistle which I have written, and which I now send, be read with great seriousness and attention before the whole congregation of believers at Colossæ; and when you have finished it, send it forward to Laodicea, that it may be read to the congregation of believers there. I have written another letter to that church, which I send by the same messengers who are the bearers of this to you. They are upon the same subject; and, when attentively compared together, they will greatly elucidate each other. Borrow, therefore, that letter from the church of Laodicea, and let it be read to the believers at Colossæ. Both societies will be better instructed, edified, and comforted, by this mutual communication of what I have written to each.

17. *And say to Archippus*², *See that thou fully discharge that ministry in the Lord, which thou hast received.*

Archippus, who, in consideration of his mature age and eminent wisdom, has been chosen and approved as the regular instructor and officiating minister of the church at Colossæ, is no doubt duly apprized of the importance of the office, and of the nature of the duties that are incumbent upon him. It may, however, tend to make a useful impression upon his mind, and to excite and encourage his zeal, if you will give him a solemn charge in my name,

¹ *From Laodicea;*] not, as some suppose, an epistle written by the Laodiceans, but an epistle written by Paul to the Christians at Laodicea, which the Colossians would receive from them. *την εκ Λαοδικείας*, *that of the Laodiceans*. "that written to them by me." Wakefield; who refers to Luke viii. 27. See Bowyer, Grotius, Knatchbull, and Newcome. This epistle is by many supposed to be lost; but it seems highly probable that the epistle which is now inscribed to the Ephesians is the letter referred to by the apostle, and that it was originally sent to the Laodiceans. There can be no doubt that this epistle was written and sent at the same time with that to the Colossians; the train of thought and the phraseology are the same in both; they are excellent commentaries upon each other, and in order to be understood should be read in connexion with each other. Compare Col. i. 26 with Eph. iii. 9; Col. ii. 13 with Eph. ii. 1, &c.; Col. iii. 11 with Eph. i. 10, &c.; Col. iii. 18, 19 with Eph. v. 22—33. See Doddridge's excellent note upon this text.

² *Archippus.*] This eminent person, who was probably the officiating minister of the church at Colossæ, is mentioned in terms of such high respect in the epistle to Philemon (ver. 2), that it is not at all probable that the apostle intended, as some have imagined, by this advice, obliquely to insinuate that Archippus had been negligent in the discharge of his official duties. See Macknight.

that he studiously fulfill, to the best of his abilities, the duties of his sacred office, without fear, and without disguise; animated by a tender concern for the welfare of his fellow-creatures, and by the awful expectation of the great account.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 17.

4. The epistle concludes with the apostle's general salutation and benediction, written with his own hand, ver. 18, 19.

The salutation of me, Paul, with my own hand. Remember these my bonds³. Favour be with you⁴.

18.

To this letter, written by the hand of a friend, and to these good wishes, I here subscribe my name with my own hand, as a testimony to its genuineness and authenticity, and that you may not be imposed upon by spurious productions passing under my name. I write to you with a chain upon my wrist. Do not you, my friends, forget it, nor the cause of this confinement. It was for preaching up boldly the liberties of the Gentile church. Value, then, and improve your privileges as you ought; and may the blessing of God be with you! Farewell.

³ Remember these my bonds.] Μνημονεύετε με τῶν δεσμῶν. "Remember these bonds of mine." Wakefield. The apostle, writing the salutation with his own hand to authenticate the epistle, 2 Thess. iii. 17, casts his eye upon the chain by which his hand was bound to that of the soldier by whom he was kept in the *custodia militari*, and gracefully alludes to it in the close of his epistle, in order to leave a deep impression of the fact upon the minds of the Christians at Colossæ, and to excite their zeal in adherence to and in the defence of those rights and privileges for which he was then suffering. See Eph. vi. 20, Acts xxviii. 16. A similar beautiful allusion to his chain is found in his speech to king Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 29.

⁴ Favour be with you.] "the favour of God." Newcome. Or perhaps of Christ, meaning the blessings of the gospel. See Phil. iv. 23. The most ancient manuscripts omit the word *Amen*, and likewise the postscript; which, however, truly relates that the epistle to the Colossians was written from Rome by Tychicus and Onesimus.

It is a common error to suppose that the rights of the individual are not subject to the rights of the community. The rights of the individual are not subject to the rights of the community, but the rights of the community are subject to the rights of the individual.

THE APPEAL

The appeal is a right which every individual has, and it is a right which is not subject to the rights of the community.

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THE EPISTLE
OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO
PHILEMON.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

PHILEMON was an inhabitant of Colossæ¹. He appears to have been a man of property and distinction, from the hospitality which he exercised, and which the apostle here commends, and from the respectful manner in which the apostle addresses him. He had been converted to the Christian religion by the apostle himself (ver. 19)², but in what manner, or at what time and place, does not appear. As Paul had not visited Colossæ; Philemon had perhaps attended his ministry during his long residence at Ephesus.

Onesimus was the slave of Philemon. Having deserted³ his master, he

¹ *Of Colossæ.*] This is apparent from Colossians iv. 9, where it is said of Onesimus the slave of Philemon, that he was of that city. Archippus, who is included in the salutation to Philemon (ver. 2), was also a minister of the gospel at Colossæ, Col. iv. 17. These evidently undesigned coincidences, as Dr. Paley well observes, *Hor. Paul.* 290, 369, strongly support the genuineness of the two epistles. Theodoret in the fifth century says that Philemon's house was still remaining at Colossæ.

² *Converted by the apostle himself.*] Dr. Benson infers from ver. 5, where the apostle only speaks of having heard of Philemon's faith, that he had never seen him; but the expression ver. 19, "thou owest to me thy own self," is so very emphatical, that it must surely allude to his having been converted by the apostle, who might afterwards have heard of his perseverance and his benevolence.

³ *Deserted, &c.*] Some infer from ver. 18 that he had also robbed his master: but this is not certain. See Macknight's Preface to the epistle.

had fled to Rome; where, having happily met with the apostle, and been converted by him, he had become a sincere and conscientious Christian. For some time after his conversion, the apostle appears to have retained him in his service; but after having had sufficient proof of his fidelity and good conduct, though his services were very acceptable and useful to him, he thought it right to send him back to Philemon, with a letter of recommendation and intercession for his pardon. Tychicus upon this occasion accompanied Onesimus, and they were both charged with the Epistle to the Colossians¹; after the delivery of which Tychicus was perhaps directed² to go on with that which was addressed to the Laodiceans, and which is commonly called the Epistle to the Ephesians³.

THIS EPISTLE, the genuineness of which is unquestionable, is a private letter⁴ from the apostle to his friend upon a particular occasion; and it is

¹ *Both charged.*] See Col. iv. 7—9.

² *Tychicus was directed.*] Eph. vi. 21, where Tychicus only is mentioned. Colossæ lay about twenty-eight miles north-east of Laodicea. Probably Onesimus was directed to deliver his letter first, and having obtained forgiveness from Philemon, he would then be authorized to join Tychicus in delivering the letter to the church at Colossæ. The apostle would scarcely have thought it expedient to make a runaway slave the bearer of a letter to the church of which his master was a member, till after a reconciliation had taken place. Perhaps the more probable supposition may be, that Tychicus sent Onesimus forward with the letter to Philemon, while he remained at Laodicea to deliver his letter there; after which he went forward to Colossæ and joined Onesimus, who had been previously reconciled to Philemon, in delivering the apostle's letter to the church at Colossæ.

³ *Commonly called, &c.*] See the Preface to the Epistle to the Ephesians.

⁴ *A private letter,*] which the apostle probably never intended nor expected to be preserved; any more than St. John intended that his letters to Gaius and to the elect lady should be regarded as inspired writings. It is sufficient for the credit of these epistles that they are genuine productions of the apostles, and that they contain many valuable sentiments and advices. Whether these epistles are canonical or not, is a verbal controversy. If "canonical" means *inspired*, neither these nor any other of the apostolic writings are so. The apostles always possessed a complete knowledge of the gospel revelation, and whatever they say or write upon this subject is of the highest authority; but there is no reason to suppose that they were inspired to deliver every discourse, or to indite every epistle. If no epistles are to be deemed canonical but those which are addressed to Christian churches, the epistle to Philemon is not canonical; but if the question is simply this, Whether this epistle ought to be received as of equal authority with the other genuine writings of the apostle? there can be no hesitation in answering in the affirmative. See Benson's *Hist. of the Epistle*, sect. ii.

"There is not much," says Dr. Priestley, "of what may be called apostolic dignity in this epistle, no article of Christian doctrine being discussed in it; yet it has great propriety and beauty as a private letter; and it clearly shows the apostle to have been no wild enthusiast, but one who was well acquainted with mankind, and with human nature, and who governed himself by that knowledge. It therefore shows us that inattention to these things is no recommendation of a Christian."

Dr. Benson very ingeniously specifies the following doctrines and precepts of Christianity, as expressed or insinuated in this epistle: *v. g.* 1. In a religious view all Christians are upon a level: Onesimus the slave, upon becoming a Christian, is the apostle's dear son and Philemon's brother. 2. Christianity makes no alteration in men's civil affairs: by Christian bap-

written with the spirit of a Christian, the authority of an apostle, the politeness of a gentleman, and the affection of a friend. It would be puerile to suppose that such a letter as this was dictated by any other inspiration than that of philanthropy and friendship. The apostle probably wrote many such; which, however they might be valued by the persons to whom they were inscribed, have long since been lost; but which no doubt all breathed the same spirit of piety, benevolence, and wisdom.

I. The apostle begins his epistle with expressing his good wishes for Philemon, his family, and friends, ver. 1—3.

II. He declares his great satisfaction in the tidings which he had received of the faith and the benevolence of his friend, and of his kindness to Christian strangers, ver. 4—7.

III. Waving his authority as an apostle, he urges him, upon the ground of personal friendship, and of the affection and regard due to him as the imprisoned ambassador of Christ, to receive Onesimus again into his family, and to forgive him his great offence, ver. 8—12.

IV. Desirous as he was to retain Onesimus at Rome, he regarded himself as bound in honour and justice to send him back to his lawful master; hoping that Philemon would no longer treat him as a slave, but as a Christian brother, and as the apostle's friend, ver. 13—17.

V. He promises to pay whatever Philemon had lost by Onesimus's dishonesty or misconduct; and expresses his firm confidence in the ready compliance of his friend, ver. 18—21.

VI. The apostle concludes the epistle with expressing his hope that he should soon be at liberty to make him a visit, and with the usual salutations and benediction, ver. 22—25.

tism a slave did not become a freedman. 3. Servants, *i. e.* slaves, should not be taken or detained from their own masters, without their masters' consent. 4. We should love and do good to all men: we should not condemn persons of low estate. The apostle has here set an example of benevolence, condescension, and Christian charity, which it behoves us to follow. 5. We should not utterly despair of those who are wicked, but use our best endeavours to reclaim them. 6. Restitution is due where an injury is done. 7. We should be grateful to our benefactors. 8. We should forgive the penitent and be heartily reconciled to them. 9. The apostle's example teaches us to do all we can to make up quarrels and differences, and to reconcile those who are at variance. 10. A wise man chooses sometimes to address in a soft and obliging manner, even in cases where there is authority to command. 11. The bishops and pastors of the Christian church, and all teachers of religion, have here the most glorious example set before them to induce them to have a most tender regard to the souls of men of all ranks and conditions. 12. Here is a most glorious proof of the good effect of Christianity, where it is rightly understood and sincerely embraced. It transforms a worthless slave into a pious, virtuous, amiable, and useful man." Benson's *History of the First Planting of the Christian Religion*, book iii. ch. x. sect. 10.

We have no account of the success of this earnest and powerful intercession in behalf of a fugitive slave; but there can be no reasonable doubt that Philemon would be eager to testify his veneration and gratitude to the apostle by a compliance with his desires to their utmost extent.

This epistle is supposed to have been written A.D. 62, a little before the close of the apostle's first imprisonment.

POSTSCRIPT.

I have annexed this short but eloquent epistle as a sort of Appendix to the Epistle to the Colossians, the two epistles having been written at the same time, and conveyed by the same person to the same place; and being mutually illustrative of each other. These reasons I hope will be accepted as a sufficient apology for the transposition.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

1. **THE** apostle introduces his epistle with expressions of good will to Philemon and his family, and to other Christian friends, ver. 1—3.

PAUL a prisoner¹ of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved brother and fellow-labourer², and to our beloved sister Appia³, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house⁴, favour be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ver. 1.
2.
3.

I Paul, who am not only a teacher of the gospel but a sufferer for it, and who have now been some years a prisoner for having preached the doctrine

¹ *A prisoner.*] Archbishop Newcome observes, that δεσμιος is a reading better supported than δαλος or αποσολος, and preferable on account of its delicacy. Dr. Benson in his note enumerates the various modes of introduction to the epistles of Paul, and shows the propriety of each.

² *Fellow-labourer.*] Some have inferred, from this expression, that Philemon was a bishop or minister of the Christian church at Colossæ. This is not improbable, though Archippus was undoubtedly such, Col. iv. 17; for it is certain that several elders or bishops were sometimes appointed to one church. See Acts xx. 17, 28. Dr. Benson, however, justly observes, that there is no necessity of drawing this conclusion: for, whoever contributed any way towards helping forward the gospel, are called the *apostle's helpers* and *fellow-labourers*, whether men or women. See ver. 24; Rom. xvi. 3, 9, 21.

³ *Appia.*] Gr. "Apphia." Dr. Benson observes that this is a Roman name, and that Paul writes it after the Hebrew manner. Appia is asserted by Chrysostom and Theodoret to have been the wife of Philemon; which, as she is mentioned next to Philemon and before Archippus, is not improbable. Many manuscripts of the best authority read *sister* instead of *beloved*; and some of the ancient versions read both.

⁴ *The church in thy house.*] It is doubted whether this means the family and friends of Philemon only, or whether the body of Christians at Colossæ, assembled for Christian worship at Philemon's house. The former is the general opinion, and it may be true; but Dr. Benson's argument, that the apostle upon other occasions where he salutes the church in a particular house, afterwards sends salutations, to individuals, does not decisively prove it. See Rom. xvi. 5, 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

Ver. 3. of Christ to the Gentiles, and Timothy the faithful and affectionate companion of my labours and sufferings, unite in our friendly salutations to Philemon our dear Christian brother and fellow-labourer in the same honourable cause, and to his faithful consort Appia our beloved sister in Christ, and to Archippus, who has voluntarily accepted the important office of a Christian minister, and is ready to share with us in all the difficulties, conflicts and dangers of this arduous service; and to all the other Christian friends, whether members of your family or otherwise, who occasionally or statedly assemble for religious worship and instruction under your hospitable roof: May the favour of God our common Father, and the unspeakable blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ our common master, abide with and enrich you all! We cannot form a better wish for you, nor give you a stronger testimony of our Christian affection.

2. The apostle expresses his great satisfaction in the faith and benevolence of his friend, and in his kind sympathy with the suffering brethren, of which he had received the most favourable accounts, ver. 4—7.

4. *I thank my God¹, continually making mention of thee in my prayers,*
5. *(having heard² of thy faith towards the Lord Jesus, and of thy love to*
6. *all the saints,) that the faith of which thou partakest may operate³ in the*
7. *acknowledgement of every thing good that is among us concerning Christ*
7. *Jesus. For we are greatly rejoiced and comforted on account of thy*

¹ *I thank my God, &c.]* Mr. Wakefield makes the construction clearer by transposing the clauses of the fourth and fifth verses. His version is, "I thank my God for the accounts which I receive of thy firm belief in the Lord Jesus, and thy love towards all the saints, making mention of thee always in my prayers, that thy fellowship in the faith," &c. I adopt the suggestion of Bowyer and Newcome, including the fifth verse in a parenthesis.

² *Having heard, &c.]* It has been before observed, that the expression "having heard" does not necessarily imply that the apostle had never seen Philemon. Six manuscripts, and the Syriac version, read *faith and love*. See Mill and Newcome. There can be no doubt that the apostle meant, and perhaps dictated, the same or similar words which occur Eph. i. 15, Col. i. 3, 4; which were written nearly at the same time. The expression might be varied by the mistake of an early transcriber. In the original, as in the common version, it stands thus: "Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints."

³ *May operate.]* "that thy partaking of the faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is among us as concerning Christ Jesus: i. e. in giving thee knowledge and experience of every good thing which God bestows upon us as Christians." Newcome. Similar to this is Mr. Wakefield's version: "that thy fellowship in the faith may have its effect in an acknowledgement of every thing good in Christ Jesus."

The best copies read ἡμῖν, *us*, for ὑμῖν, *you*; which the Primate properly notices, *every good thing among us*, i. e. us believers, concerning Christ.

"Optans ut fides quam nobiscum habes communem, magis magisque se manifestet (per opera bona) tuque cognoscas magnitudinem beneficiorum, quæ debemus Christo. ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, *una cum cognitione*." Rosenmuller.

love, because the bowels⁴ of the saints have been refreshed by thee, brother. Ver. 7.

I have heard much from Epaphras your fellow-citizen, who is now with me, and from others, of your faith in Christ, of your firm adherence to the pure doctrine of Christianity, and of that which is indeed the necessary consequence of true faith, your kindness to all who bear the Christian name. I continually bless God on these accounts; and I earnestly pray that the vigour of your faith may discover itself more and more in your zeal for good works, and in your increasing knowledge of the unspeakable blessings which we derive from the gospel of Christ. And truly, my dear brother, I am delighted to hear with what tender sympathy you have behaved to your afflicted and suffering brethren, and how much their broken spirits have been soothed, and cheered, and comforted, by your seasonable advice and benevolent aid. The very report of your extraordinary kindness to the persecuted and impoverished brethren, cheers my spirit even in prison.

3. Waving his authority as an apostle, he urges Philemon, upon the ground of affection and the tender respect due to his character, to receive his penitent slave into his house again, ver. 8—12.

Therefore, though I might use great freedom in Christ to enjoin thee⁵ 8.
what is fit, I rather, for affection's sake⁶, intreat, being such an one as 9.
Paul the ambassador⁷, and now, even the prisoner of Jesus Christ. I in- 10.

⁴ Bowels:] i. e. affections. Col. iii. 8. "the minds of the saints are soothed in thee." Wakefield. "*Multorum pauperum Christianorum animos recreasti dum ex opibus tuis eorum necessitatibus tempestive subvenires.*" Rosenmuller.

⁵ To enjoin thee.] Mark the delicacy of the apostle's address: waving his authority as an apostle of Christ, he rather chooses to appeal to his friend's affection, to his benevolence, to his tender respect to the suffering ambassador of Christ. Nor does he mention Onesimus's name till after he has described him in the most endearing characters; and then recommends him to be received into Philemon's house as if he had been the apostle's own darling son. Nothing can be conceived more delicate, tender, and appropriate, than the apostle's language upon this occasion.

⁶ For affection's sake.] Literally, "for love's sake." "because of my love." Newcome.—"because of my love for thee." Wakefield. "by that love which thou bearest to the saints and to me." Macknight. Perhaps the apostle included both: *q. d.* because of our mutual affection to each other.

⁷ Paul the ambassador.] Παυλος πρεσβυτης. The apostle was called a young man when Stephen was stoned, about A.D. 36, Acts vii. 58. He could not well be less than thirty, considering the commissions with which he was charged: see Acts ix. 1, 2. If, therefore, this epistle were written A.D. 62, the apostle would be about fifty-six or fifty-seven; and could not with propriety call himself aged. Dr. Benson observes, that the apostle upon no other occasion alludes to his advanced years, but frequently to his character as an ambassador of Christ in bonds, and particularly in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, written nearly at the same time with this to Philemon. Eph. vi. 20. He admits that the proper word for *ambassador* is

- Ver. 10. *treat thee in behalf of a son of mine*¹; *whom I have begotten during these*
 11. *my bonds, Onesimus; who was lately of no value*² *to thee, but will now*
 12. *be of great value to thee, even as he has been to me*³. *Whom I have sent*
*back: do thou, therefore, receive him as my own beloved son*⁴.

I have a favour to request; which, indeed, as an apostle of Christ, I should be fully authorized to enjoin as a duty; but, knowing your regard for me, I would rather solicit it as an act of kindness, of kindness to myself personally; a gratification which you will not refuse to your friend under the peculiar circumstances in which he writes to you, having long been employed by Jesus Christ our common Lord as his ambassador to the heathen world, and having now, as you well know, for some years suffered a tedious confinement for his sake. Relying, therefore, upon your friendship and sympathy, I prefer my request in behalf of a dear convert of mine, my own son in the faith of Jesus, whom I have brought over to the profession and practice of the Christian religion since I have been a prisoner at Rome; and who, by his virtuous conduct and kind attentions, has endeared

πρεσβευτης, but he remarks that the LXX. have used *πρεσβυτης* for an ambassador, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, and that it is so used 2 Macc. xi. 34; and if it is contended that these instances are slips of the pen, he desires that the same allowance may be made in the present case. The Doctor adds that Theophylact read *πρεσβευτης*.

Dr. Bentley maintains, not only that the adversative particle *δε* requires *πρεσβευτης* as opposed to *δесмиος*, but that it is highly probable that the original reading was *παλαι*, instead of *Παυλος*, which would properly correspond with *νυνι δε*, so that the proper translation would be, "for affection's sake I intreat thee: being one who, having long been an ambassador, am now even a prisoner of Jesus Christ." See Bowyer. These conjectures are very plausible, though not supported by the authority of manuscripts or versions. Dr. Priestley says, "that Paul could not, at this time, have been much more than fifty-four or fifty-five years old; but through his incessant labours he might be infirm." But there is not the slightest reason for this supposition: Paul never complains or alludes to the infirmities of age; and what man of fifty-four or fifty-five ever speaks of himself as *the aged*? Unsupported as the conjecture is by authorities, I think that, from the connexion, it is almost impossible to doubt that the apostle speaks of himself as "Paul the ambassador," and not "Paul the aged."

¹ *A son of mine, &c.*] "This, which is the order of the original," Dr. Doddridge observes, "keeps the mind in an agreeable suspense, and has a fine effect, which every reader of taste will quickly perceive."

² *Lately of no value, &c.*] So Mr. Wakefield. Observe in what gentle language the apostle speaks of the fault of Onesimus, that he might not irritate the feelings of Philemon. See Benson and Macknight. Doddridge remarks, that "Paul evidently refers to the etymology of the word Onesimus, which signifies *profitable*." This is more evident in ver. 20, where he alludes to his name.

³ *Even as he has been, &c.*] Macknight translates the words, "but now will be very profitable to thee, even as to me." See Benson.

⁴ *My beloved son:*] literally, "'my own bowels,' i. e. my son, a part of me." Macknight. Dr. Benson remarks, that "there are many passages in the classics in which children are called the bowels of their parents," and refers to Le Clerc and Pricæus upon the text. He observes how the apostle rises in his expressions; ver. 10, he calls Onesimus his *son*, here his *bowels*, i. e. his beloved son; and ver. 17, his *very self*.

himself to me beyond expression, as if he were my own child. And this is no other than Onesimus, your fugitive slave; from whom, of late, you have derived little satisfaction and little profit, but who, I trust, will hereafter redeem his character, and prove a most valuable assistant to you, as he has indeed been to me, ever since his conversion. By my advice and direction he is returned to you; receive him, my dear friend, into your family again, and admit him into your house with the same readiness, with the same tenderness, with which you would entertain a favourite son of mine, if I had sent him to visit you. Ver. 12.

4. Desirous as he was to have retained Onesimus, the apostle, nevertheless, felt himself bound in justice to send him back to his master, confident that he would be treated by him in the kindest manner, ver. 13—17.

I was indeed desirous to keep him with me, that he might, in thy stead, have ministered to me in these bonds for the gospel. But without thy consent I would do nothing, that thy goodness might not be, as it were, from constraint, but voluntary. For perhaps he therefore was separated⁵ from thee for a short time, that thou mightest receive him back for ever⁶. No longer as a slave, but above a slave, as a brother beloved very much by me, but how much more by thee, both as a man and as a believer in the Lord⁷. If, therefore, thou regard me as a friend⁸, receive him as myself. 13.
14.
15.
16.
17.

The services of Onesimus were so very useful to me, that I should have been glad to have retained him with me to have performed those offices of kindness and sympathy for me in my imprisonment, which your tender friend-

⁵ *Was separated.*] Dr. Benson remarks, that "the apostle here uses a soft expression, which seems to ascribe the separation of Onesimus from his master to the over-ruling providence of God for the accomplishment of his great and good purposes, as the bondage of Joseph is represented, Gen. xlv. 5.

⁶ *For ever:*] i. e. to the end of life. "This," says Dr. Benson, "is one instance in which the phrase *for ever* must stand for a finite or indefinite duration, and there are other instances in scripture. The apostle probably alludes to the case of the Hebrew servant, who voluntarily consented to serve his master for life, Exod. xxi. 2, 6; Deut. xv. 17. See also Lev. xxv. 46."

"*Αἰώνιον* possumus vertere, semper, perpetuò; *ut sensus sit*, ut eum retineas perpetuo, *servum bonum, tibi que utilem; quæ sententia præferenda esse videtur.*" Rosenmuller.

Observe, that the apostle does not order Philemon to set his slave at liberty; nor did Onesimus's conversion emancipate him from the yoke. Christianity makes no alteration in the civil states of men. See 1 Cor. vii. 20, and Mr. Locke's note; also Benson *in loc.*

⁷ *As a man, &c.*] In the original it is "in the flesh, and in the Lord." Mr. Wakefield's version is, "as a man, and as a Christian;" which is undoubtedly the true meaning of the words. Nevertheless, as the word *Christian* was in use in the apostolic age, and yet the apostle never adopts it, but constantly uses in lieu of it *οἱ ἐν Κυρίῳ*, or *ἐν Χριστῷ*, or some equivalent phrase, I think it not proper to use the word *Christian* in translating his writings, but rather to adopt his own phrase, supplying the words that are understood.

⁸ *Friend.*] *καίγωνος* a joint partaker with him in the blessings of the gospel: See Doddridge and Benson.

Ver. 17. ship would have been eager to have performed had you been present with me; and which I am fully persuaded that you would have been well pleased that Onesimus should have remained to have executed in your stead. Nevertheless, as I had no opportunity of obtaining your consent, I would not keep him without it, lest it should be suspected by those who knew not the liberality of your spirit, that I detained your servant against your will.

And perhaps the intention of divine Providence in this temporary separation might be, that your fugitive slave, being in this interval converted to the Christian faith, might be restored to you to be a comfort, and to be useful to you as long as you live. Not indeed in the capacity of a slave, but in the nobler character of a friend, a brother, a fellow-Christian, very dear to me, who am his spiritual father, and who have been greatly benefited by his services; and still more dear to you, who have known him longer, who will feel a peculiar interest in the conversion of the penitent fugitive, and who will, for a much longer period, enjoy the benefit of his faithful and tender attentions. As a slave, you will be pleased with his dutiful behaviour; as a Christian, you will acknowledge and love him as a brother. If, then, you love me, treat Onesimus with kindness; receive him as my representative and harbinger, and entertain him as myself.

5. The apostle promises to make good whatever loss Philemon might have sustained from Onesimus; and continues to urge his suit in full confidence of success, ver. 18—21.

18. *But if he have done thee any wrong¹, or owe thee any thing, charge it*
 19. *to my account. I, Paul, have written² it with my own hand, I will repay*
 20. *it; not to say unto thee, that thou owest even thine own self to me. Yea,*

¹ *Any wrong.*] Some have inferred from this expression that Onesimus had robbed his master; but of this fact there is no proof. The apostle means to obviate every possible objection to the re-admission of Onesimus; and therefore offers to pay whatever might be due to Philemon, whether from the loss of his slave's service, or on any other account. "*Quæ Paulus hucusque scripserat plena erant humanitatis; reliqua plenissima sunt urbanitatis. Εἰ τι κ. τ. λ. non ad vivum resecanda, eleganter potius et facete dicta esse quum mutua inter Paulum et Philemonem officia, tum sequentia satis declarant.*" Rosenmuller.

² *I, Paul, have written it.*] This is a promissory note, which the apostle writes with his own hand. "*Dubitari potest, scripseritne Apostolus totam hanc epistolam manu propria, an hanc tantum ejus particulam, literis forte, ut Hieronymus conjiciebat, majusculis, quod omnino augeret facetam orationis urbanitatem, quam nemo non agnoscat in eleganti quæ sequitur præteritione; ἰνα μη κ. τ. λ.*" Rosenmuller. The learned writer thinks that the apostle means to be facetious; but is not the subject too grave to admit of that supposition? It must, however, be allowed that the apostle, in the next verse, puns upon Onesimus's name. "It is not certain," says Dr. Priestley, "that Onesimus had robbed his master of any thing. All that Paul alludes to might be the loss of his service for so long a time as he had been absent from him."

brother, let me enjoy this satisfaction³ from thee in the Lord; gratify my tender feelings⁴ in Christ. In full assurance of thy compliance, I have thus written to thee, knowing that thou wilt do even more than I ask. Ver. 20. 21.

Let it not be any objection to the pardon of Onesimus that he is in your debt, or that he has injured you in any shape, either by dishonesty or neglect. Set this to my account. I, Paul, poor and prisoner as I am, will undertake to satisfy every just and legal claim, though Onesimus should not have it in his power to do so. This hand-writing of mine shall be your warrant for the demand. Nor, if you choose to urge it, will I bar your claim by reminding you of the far greater obligation you are yourself under to me, who have been the means of redeeming you from a much heavier bondage, and saving you from a severer condemnation. Yes, my dear Christian brother, waving all considerations of this kind, let me prevail upon you to gratify my most earnest wishes, in a case which so loudly appeals to your humanity and Christian benevolence. And I am confident that I shall not solicit in vain; for I know so well your generous spirit, that I am persuaded your kindness to Onesimus will even exceed what I request on his account.

6. The epistle closes with the expression of the apostle's hope that he should soon have it in his power to make his friend a visit, and with the customary salutations and benediction, ver. 22—25.

At the same time also prepare me a lodging⁵, for I hope that through your prayers I shall be mercifully restored to you. Epaphras⁶ my fellow- 22. 23.

³ Let me enjoy this satisfaction:] or, let me be benefited by thee. *οὐαίμην*, an allusion to the name of Onesimus: *q. d.* Be you an Onesimus to me. In the Lord; *q. d.* let me enjoy that Christian satisfaction in you in this particular, which you will derive from the pious and dutiful services of Onesimus as long as you live. "Fac ut hunc fructum percipiam ex te, ut homine Christiano. Paulus fortassis alludere voluit ad Onesimi nomen; nam Paronomasiæ usus non abhorret a stilo Paulino." Rosenmuller.

⁴ Gratify my feelings.] Gr. "refresh my bowels."—"refresh my feelings." Wakefield. In Christ: This is the reading best supported. The received text reads "in the Lord." See Benson.

The allusion in the expression *refresh* or *soothe my bowels*, is not to the relief of hunger; but to the gratification of the kind and tender affections. "Mentem meam, metuentem ne quid acerbius in eum consulas, tranquillam redde. Proprie, ad quietem redige viscera mea." Rosenmuller.

⁵ Prepare me a lodging.] Dr. Doddridge remarks, that "Theodoret justly observes, that Paul's mentioning his purpose of coming to lodge with Philemon quickly, would naturally add greater weight to his interposition in favour of Onesimus."

⁶ Epaphras.] Grotius and Brenius think that Epaphras is an abbreviation of Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 25, iv. 18; and Dr. Benson allows that the epistle to the Philippians was written after this to Philemon, because he there says that he trusted he should come to them *quickly*, Phil. ii. 24; which is an expression which he does not use to Philemon. Epaphras is mentioned in the epistle to the Colossians, i. 7, iv. 12, 13. Dr. Benson thinks he was a different person

- Ver. 24. *captive in Christ Jesus, Mark¹, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-labourers, salute thee: the favour of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all².*

I entertain great hopes that your prayers, in concurrence with my own, and those of other Christian churches, will obtain the blessing of a speedy release from my present confinement: in which event I propose soon to make you a visit, to take up my residence at your hospitable mansion, and to thank you in person for your attention to this letter. Let an apartment be prepared for me, as you know not how soon I may be with you. Epaphras, whom you know as a highly respected minister of Christ, and my fellow-captive in this holy war, sends his affectionate salutations to you. Mark and Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, the two former, countrymen of my own and observers of the law; the two latter, converts from the heathen world, all of them harmoniously co-operating with me in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles; unite in transmitting to you their friendly salutations. With theirs, accept my own best wishes for you and for your friends; that you may continue to possess in its purity, and to experience in its power, the inestimable blessings of the gospel of our great master Jesus Christ, the rich, unsolicited, efficacious gift of God for the recovery and restoration of an apostate world.

from Epaphroditus. He is called by Paul his fellow-captive (*συναιχμαλωτός*), and he might have been in custody at Rome some time before; but Benson assigns plausible reasons for supposing that he was not a prisoner when this letter was written. He also observes, that "by calling Epaphras his fellow-captive, the apostle a fifth time put Philemon in mind of his bonds." See ver. 9, 10, 13.

¹ *Mark, &c.*] These are the same persons, with the exception of Justus, who were mentioned in the salutations at the close of the epistle to the Colossians, ch. iv.

² *You all.*] In the original "your spirit:" the pronoun is plural, which indicates that the salutation extends to Philemon and his friends. *Your spirit:* i. e. yourselves. The word *Amen* and the postscript are wanting in the best copies.

THE FIRST EPISTLE

OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE THESSALONIANS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THESSALONICA was a very considerable maritime town, a place of great trade and opulence, and the metropolis of Macedonia. Its ancient name was Thermæ, and it stood upon the Thermæan Bay; but having been rebuilt and enlarged by Philip King of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, he gave it the name of Thessalonica, in commemoration of a great victory which he had obtained over the Thessalians. It is now called Saloniki; and is to this day a place of considerable trade, and in possession of the Turks.

A.D. 51, while Paul and Silas, with Luke, Timothy, and other associates, were engaged in preaching the gospel in the Lesser Asia, a vision appeared to the apostle, inviting him into Macedonia. Regarding this as a divine suggestion, Paul and his companions immediately crossed the sea to Neapolis, and thence advanced to Philippi, a considerable city of that district of Macedonia, where they preached the gospel with great success, and converted many. But Paul having restored to her senses a young woman who was insane, her keepers, who had exhibited her as inspired, and who had enriched themselves by vending her supposed oracles, enraged at their loss, excited

the indignation of the magistrates and populace against the apostles, who were severely beaten and imprisoned, without being heard in their own defence. This transaction is related by Luke, who was an eye-witness, and probably a fellow-sufferer, Acts xvi.

After they were set at liberty, and the magistrates, at the requisition of the apostle, had made proper concessions for their illegal and brutal behaviour, Paul and his associates passed on to Thessalonica; and in that city they resumed their ministry with undaunted courage. Three sabbath-days they reasoned with the Jews in their synagogue, arguing from the scriptures the Messiahship of Jesus. And not wholly without success; for some even of the Jews believed: but their principal success, at least at the beginning, appears to have been amongst the devout Gentiles and the pious women, who were worshipers of the one true God, Acts xvii. 1—4.

From Luke's history it would be natural to conclude, that the apostle and his companions continued no longer than three weeks or a month at Thessalonica; but as it appears from the first epistle to the Thessalonians that the church consisted chiefly of converts from the idolatrous Gentiles, of whom the evangelist makes no mention; also that during the apostle's residence in that city he and his party maintained themselves chiefly by manual occupations, concerning which Luke is also silent; and, further, it being evident from the epistle to the Philippians that these generous converts sent more than once a supply for his relief while he continued at Thessalonica, there can be no doubt that he resided in that city a considerable time, probably some months. At last, the Jews, envying the apostle's success, excited a tumult against him amongst the lower classes of the people, and accused him and his associates, before the magistrates, of treason against the Roman emperor. And though the magistrates, upon inquiry into the case, had the good sense to dismiss the charge, it was found advisable to send away Paul and Silas by night to Beræa, to screen them from the fury of the populace, Acts xvii. 10.

At Beræa the apostle found among the Jews, hearers more candid and inquisitive than those at Thessalonica; and continued prosecuting his ministry with considerable success, both among the Jews and heathen, till a fresh tumult was excited against him and his companions by certain malicious emissaries from the Jews at Thessalonica; in consequence of which Paul immediately left the city, and was conducted to Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy behind, with a strict charge to follow him with all convenient speed, Acts xvii. 15.

With this direction Timothy soon complied; but, for what reason does not appear, Silas did not join the apostle at Athens. During the residence of Paul in this city, and while Timothy was with him, it was the apostle's intention to have visited Thessalonica again in person, and more than once he was upon the point of carrying his resolution into effect, but was prevented by some unknown obstruction; perhaps by the information that it would not be safe for him to return at present. Being, however, impatient to receive intelligence of his persecuted friends, he sent Timothy, his only associate at Athens, to Thessalonica, to bring him some account of their state. In the mean time, the apostle, not meeting with much success at Athens, removed to Corinth about the latter end of the year A.D. 51, Acts xviii. 1; and here he resided and exercised his ministry with great success for nearly two years. Nor was it till after the apostle had been for some time at Corinth that Timothy came to him from Thessalonica in company with Silas. The intelligence which Timothy communicated to the apostle was in the main agreeable, but in part otherwise. Their faith continued firm; but they had fallen into some errors of doctrine, and were imperfect in the practice of Christian morals. And it was in this view of their case, in order to confirm what was right, and to rectify what was amiss, that the apostle indited this epistle, probably in the spring of A.D. 52;¹ joining with his own the names of Silas and Timothy, who were well known to the Thessalonians as his associates in the ministry of the gospel.

This short but excellent epistle is one of those the genuineness of which has never been called in question. The apostle inscribes it with his own name; and it has from age to age been cited as his, without any hint or suspicion that it could have been the production of any other author. The internal evidence of its authenticity is likewise very strong. The undesigned coincidences with Luke's history, the light which that history and the epistle mutually reflect upon each other, and the consequent support which they afford to each other's authority, are stated very pointedly and forcibly by Dr. Paley². The history illustrates the strong expressions and representations of the epistle, and the epistle supplies the omissions in the history. And the solemn

¹ *In the spring of A.D. 52.* "This epistle," says Dr. Priestley, "was written A.D. 52, and is therefore the oldest writing of any Christian. Being undoubtedly authentic, and not written after, but during the time of the transactions it alludes to, it supplies a most indisputable evidence of the certainty of those facts which necessarily imply the truth of the whole Christian history."

² *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. ix.

charge at the close of the epistle, "that it should be publicly read to the whole church," is a convincing proof that the writer was no impostor. To which may be added, that the state of things alluded to in the epistle could only have existed in the infancy of the Christian church; and that the pious and benevolent spirit which breathes in every sentence of the epistle, and the tendency of the whole to promote piety and virtue, and the love of truth and goodness, cannot fail to impress upon the mind of the reader the most favourable sentiments of the character of the writer.

It appears from the epistle, that the Thessalonian converts had adhered with great firmness to the Christian faith amidst many dangers and persecutions; that they entertained a great affection for the apostle and his associates, and lived in love and harmony with each other. It nevertheless also appears that they had fallen into some considerable errors concerning the state of the dead; and that the characters of some among them fell very short of the evangelical standard of purity and universal virtue. The main design, therefore, of the apostle in this epistle is, to establish their minds in the profession of the Christian faith; to rectify their errors in points of doctrine; to remind them of the perfection of the Christian morality, and to enforce the practice of universal virtue.

In the prosecution of this design, the apostle, having INTRODUCED the epistle in his usual form, joining likewise the names of Silas and Timothy with his own,

In the FIRST place returns thanks to God for the great success of the gospel at Thessalonica, in consequence of the miraculous energies by which it was confirmed. He bears witness to the exemplary fortitude and zeal of the Thessalonian converts, and to the high reputation which they had acquired through all the adjacent regions by the astonishing and happy change which they had undergone, in their conversion from heathen idolatry to the belief and profession of the doctrine of Christ. Ch. i. 2—10.

SECONDLY, The apostle makes a solemn and affecting appeal to the Thessalonians with regard to his own character and conduct during his residence among them. He particularly alludes to the courage with which he exercised his ministry at Thessalonica after the infamous treatment which he had experienced at Philippi: He asserts his absolute freedom from all corrupt motives in preaching the gospel, and particularly from self-interest and ambition: He reminds them of the gentleness of his manners, of his affectionate

solicitude for their improvement, of the example of honourable industry which he had set before them, in supporting himself by his own manual labour, and finally, that as he had himself exhibited a just pattern of Christian virtue, so he had strongly inculcated upon them the indispensable necessity of maintaining a character correspondent to their Christian profession. Ch. ii. 1—12.

THIRDLY, The apostle thanks God for their cordial reception of the gospel of Christ, and for their inflexible adherence to it under the persecutions which they endured, which were similar and equal to those which the believing Hebrews suffered from their unconverted countrymen, of whose abandoned character, and approaching doom, he gives an affecting delineation and an alarming warning. Ch. ii. 13—16.

FOURTHLY, The apostle relates, that having been prevented by the violence of persecution from gratifying his earnest desire of making a visit to Thessalonica, and of enjoying the society of friends whose final happiness was the object of his most ardent wish, he had at last determined to send Timothy, his only associate at Athens, to Thessalonica, to visit, to encourage, and to comfort them. And the apostle assures them, that it was a particular object of this evangelist's mission to remove any ill impression which might have been made upon their minds by the persecutions to which he was himself exposed. And being anxious to hear of their state, he expresses the joy he felt at the good tidings which Timothy had brought of their perseverance in the faith, and their affectionate remembrance of him; which he assures them was on his part reciprocal. He earnestly prays that he may be permitted to make them a visit; and in the mean time he expresses his fervent desire that they may improve in mutual affection, in general benevolence and in universal virtue. Ch. ii. 17—iii. 13.

FIFTHLY, The apostle earnestly cautions the Thessalonians against those vices to which the heathen were most addicted; and particularly warns them against every species of impurity, as utterly inconsistent with the profession of Christianity. He also recommends mutual affection and habitual industry. Ch. iv. 1—12.

SIXTHLY, The apostle corrects some erroneous opinions which they appear to have entertained concerning the state of the Christian dead. And having assured them that the great design of the mission of Christ was to reveal the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, of which his own resurrection was a pattern and a proof; he informs them that believers who will be found

alive at the final appearance of Christ, will enjoy no advantage over those who are dead. For that the dead will be raised, while those who will then be living are undergoing a necessary change in the constitution of their bodies: and that the whole human race shall bear their part, at the same time, upon this solemn occasion. Ch. iv. 13—18.

SEVENTHLY, The uncertainty of the time of the second appearance of Christ, is urged by the apostle as a powerful motive to vigilance and activity in the discharge of duty. Ch. v. 1—11.

EIGHTHLY, The apostle closes the epistle with practical exhortations. Particularly, he recommends respect and affection to their Christian instructors; a peaceable spirit; tender vigilance over each other; reciprocation of mutual good offices; prayer and thanksgiving; a proper estimation of spiritual gifts, and particularly of prophecy; caution in judgement, and abhorrence of vice. He then expresses his earnest wish for their perfection in virtue; assuring them, that God will impart every necessary aid for this purpose. And having sent his salutations, and enjoined the public reading of this epistle in the church, he takes leave with his usual apostolical BENE-DICTION.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

THE apostle Paul, joining with his own the names of Silas and Timothy, Ch. I.
inscribes the epistle to the church at Thessalonica, ch. i. 1.

*PAUL and Silvanus, and Timothy*¹, to the church of the Thessalonians, Ver. 1.
who believe in God the Father², and in the Lord Jesus Christ, favour be
to you, and peace³.

¹ *Paul and Silvanus, and Timothy.*] Silvanus was unquestionably the same with Silas, and was with the apostle at Corinth when he wrote this epistle, Acts xviii. 5. Indeed the introduction of his name, and that of Timothy, is a proof that the epistle was written from Corinth, and not, as the postscript says, from Athens. Dr. Chandler observes, that "though Paul joins the names of Silas and Timothy with his own, he is far from meaning to represent them as of equal rank and authority." See ch. iii. 2, iv. 2, v. 27. Dr. Benson accounts for Paul not assuming, in the inscription to this epistle, the title of an apostle, by the supposition that his authority had not been called in question at Thessalonica.

² *To the church who believe in God the Father, &c.*] Dr. Benson observes, that "the two fundamental articles of Christianity are, that *there is only one living and true God*; and that *Jesus is the Christ*, or the great prophet and saviour of the world. The idolatrous Gentiles believed neither; the Jews and devout Gentiles believed the first; the Christians believed both, and without it they could not have been entitled to Christian communion." To be in God and Jesus Christ, is to believe in God and in Jesus Christ. See 1 John v. 20. Dr. Benson, in his note upon this verse, has given the various senses in which the word *church* is used in the New Testament. He observes, that "the word *ἐκκλησία* sometimes signifies any assembly whatever, Acts xix. 32, 39, 40; but is most commonly used in a religious sense. It signifies, 1. All who profess the Christian religion, Acts v. 11, 1 Cor. xii. 28, and other places. 2. Only true and faithful Christians, Eph. i. 22, 23, v. 25, 29; Col. i. 18, 24. This has been called the *true* or *invisible* church, as the preceding is sometimes called the *visible*, the *universal*, or the *catholic* church. 3. Most commonly one assembly or congregation, such as statedly meet together for the worship of God. 4. A family joined together in worshiping God through Jesus Christ. 5. The professed people of God on earth called the church *militant*; and sometimes good men in a state of happiness called the church *triumphant*. Comp. Eph. v. 27 with Eph. v. 23. 6. Qu. Whether churches, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, may not signify the *assemblings* of the same

Ch. I.
Ver. 1.

— This epistle is indited by Paul, who is the messenger of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to the idolatrous heathen, and who lately incurred great persecution and hazard in exercising his mission at Thessalonica. With his, are joined the names of Silas and Timothy, his beloved and faithful associates in the ministry of the gospel, and who were also his fellow-labourers and fellow-sufferers in that great and opulent city; who are, therefore, well known to the believers there, and who feel, and are in this way anxious to express, their sympathy and affection for them. And it is inscribed in our united names to the body of professing Christians at Thessalonica, who are distinguished from their heathen neighbours by the knowledge and worship of the one true God, the Father of all mankind, and from both Jews and heathen, by an acknowledgement of Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah, and a professed subjection to him as their teacher and master. And for the dear friends for whose instruction and salvation we have exerted our earnest and united efforts, the best wish that we can form is, that they may enjoy that inward and unspeakable peace and satisfaction which is the genuine fruit of a practical belief in the gospel, that free and precious donation of God to man.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE expresses his joy and gratitude for the success of the gospel at Thessalonica, and for the great and extensive reputation which the new converts from heathenism had acquired by their fortitude and zeal.
Ch. i. 2—10.

1. The apostle assures them of his grateful and affectionate remembrance of them in his devout addresses to God, ver. 2, 3.
2. *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you with-*

Christians at different times for Christian worship? Dr. Benson adds from Le Clerc on 1 Cor. xvi. 19, that using the word "church" for a place, was a signification of it wholly unknown in the times of the apostles; in which the word *ἐκκλησία* was always used for an assembly, as well among the Christians as by the Greeks."

³ *Favour, &c.*] The words "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," which conclude the sentence in the received text, are omitted in some ancient manuscripts and versions, and are not noticed by the Greek commentators; with Mr. Wakefield, therefore, I leave them out. It is observed that bishops and deacons are not mentioned in this inscription by the apostle, probably because such officers did not then exist among them. See Grotius and Benson.

*out ceasing*¹ *in our prayers, remembering in the presence of our God and Father*², *your active faith, your laborious love*³, *and your patient expectation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ch. I.
Ver. 3.

Such, my brethren, is our affection for you, and so deeply do we interest ourselves in your conversion to the Christian doctrine, and in your adherence to your profession, that we continually bear you upon our hearts in our daily exercises of devotion. And in the awful presence of that Great Being who vouchsafes to acknowledge the high and endearing relations of a God and Father to the converted Gentile, as well as to the believing Jew, we often reflect with heartfelt satisfaction upon your Christian virtues; upon that faith which is in you a powerful and operative principle productive of good works; upon that love which grudges no toil, and which shuns no dangers for the good of others, and to the generous efforts of which we have ourselves been so much indebted; of that firm expectation of the second appearance of our master Jesus Christ to judge the world and to reward his true disciples, which induces you to undergo with fortitude and cheerfulness the losses and sufferings to which you may now be exposed for his sake. And when we call to mind these distinguished virtues of our Thessalonian brethren, our hearts overflow with gratitude to God, and our lips abound in praises and thanksgivings on your account.

2. The apostle declares that when he first preached the gospel to them, he soon became assured of their right of admission into the family of God, by the proofs which he was enabled to give of his divine mission, and by the success of his ministry; of which facts they were themselves witnesses, ver. 4, 5.

¹ *Making mention of you without ceasing.*] Benson, Wakefield, and many other versions and commentators ancient and modern, join *αδιαλείπτως* (*without ceasing*) to ver. 2. See Rom. i. 9, 10, 2 Tim. i. 3.

² *Remembering in the presence, &c.*] So Benson and Chandler. "He remembered these things before God," says Dr. Chandler, "thankful to him that they were wrought in them, and earnestly praying to him that he would continue and establish them."

³ *Laborious love.*] "the laboriousness of your love." Wakefield. Dr. Chandler observes, that "the original word *κοπος* signifies difficulties and troubles, and that the apostle means those difficulties and afflictions and dangers to which either their love of Christianity or their peculiar affection to the apostle exposed them." It is supposed that the apostle here particularly alludes to the care which they took to screen his person when the Jews excited a tumult at Thessalonica, and to their sending him away privately to Berea. Acts xvii. 10. *Gr. work of faith, labour of love, patience of hope.* "Remembering without ceasing before our God and Father, your effectual faith, your laborious painful love, and your patient hope or expectation of the Lord Jesus Christ." Chandler. This construction is not uncommon. Col. i. 22. *The body of his flesh*: i. e. his fleshly body. See also Col. iii. 14, Eph. vi. 12.

Ch. I.
Ver. 4, 5.

We know¹, brethren, beloved of God², that he hath chosen you, because the gospel preached by us came to you, not in word only, but also in power, and in the holy spirit³, and with great conviction⁴, as ye know what kind of persons we were among you for your sakes.

¹ *We know, &c.] i. e.* we are assured that you are equally with the Jews the beloved and chosen people of God; because our doctrine was confirmed by the holy spirit, and was received by you with full conviction. "The election spoken of," says Dr. Chandler, "is evidently their election to be the church and people of God, to all the privileges and advantages, and means of salvation by Christ, and to eternal life and blessedness, as the great end of their faith. The great question in these early days was, not about any particular secret choice of persons, unconditionally and absolutely to eternal life. This controversy the primitive church knew nothing of; the debate was of another nature, and precisely this: Whether circumcision and the observation of the law of Moses, as well as faith in Christ, were necessary to render the Gentiles equally partakers of the privileges of the kingdom or church of God with the Jews themselves? This the Jews pleaded and persecuted for; and the apostle Paul as strenuously and constantly denied."

² *Beloved of God.]* This is the proper arrangement of the words; and not, as in the common version, "your election of God." See Benson, Chandler, Wakefield, Newcome.

³ *In power, and in the holy spirit.]* "If we did only and barely affirm it, then might our enemies the Jews have reproached and denied it. But it was *in power*: we confirmed it by miraculous works. And *in the holy ghost*: we conferred on you the extraordinary gifts of the holy spirit, as the sure evidence of your being made children of God." Chandler. This is unquestionably the apostle's meaning. He constantly refers all his success to his miraculous powers, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5, without which it would have been quite impossible that a doctrine so hostile to the prejudices and to the passions of mankind should have made so rapid and extensive a progress. One is grieved, therefore, that such a critic as Rosenmuller should endeavour to explain away the obvious meaning of the words. "*δυναμεις και πνευμα αγιον, vis et spiritus sanctus: i. e. dotes divinae, quae se exserebant in Paulo, dum ea docuit quae ab hominibus excogitari non poterant. Alii εν δυναμει vertunt miraculis patrandis: Sed miracula Paulus Thessalonicae non videtur patrasse. Lege historiam Act. xvii.*" Rosenmuller. But Luke's account is very brief. The epistle shows that the apostle's residence and success at Thessalonica far exceeded what is reported in the history.

And let me here be permitted to observe, that whatever learned or speculative men may think or say, a belief in miracles, that is, in certain deviations from the established course and order of nature, or what is sometimes sneeringly called *supernaturalism*, is absolutely indispensable to a belief in the Christian religion. Christianity is itself a miracle; it is a doctrine supernaturally communicated to the first teachers of it, and it is supported altogether by miracles; by the resurrection of Jesus, and by the gifts of the holy spirit to him and his apostles. Whoever denies the resurrection of Jesus, or his miraculous powers, must believe him to have been an impostor, and his apostles the wilful abettors of an impious fraud. And for men who cast this imputation upon the first teachers of the gospel to assume the name of Christians is an abuse of language, whatever veneration they may profess for the morality of the gospel, or for the character of its founder, or whatever may be the respectability of their own character.

But, let it be remembered, that though Christianity requires a belief in miracles, it by no means challenges implicit faith. On the contrary, it offers in behalf of its two great miracles, The resurrection of Christ, and The gifts of the holy spirit, a kind and a degree of historical evidence which never existed in the world before, which exceeds the evidence of any fact recorded in ancient history; which is fully proportioned to the extraordinary nature, the antecedent improbability, and the unspeakable importance of the facts to be proved, and the fallacy of which would be a violation of the laws of the human mind, as real and far more incredible than any of the miracles essential to the support of Christianity are of the laws of matter and the course of nature in the external world.

⁴ *With great conviction.] πληροφορια, à πληροφορεω, plene fero, metaphora desumpta de navibus, cum ventis implentur vela secundis.* Schleusner. "It signifies," says Dr. Chandler, "the

My dear brethren ; for such I may now justly call you, since God our common Father has selected you from the idolatrous heathen, has favoured you equally with ourselves with the privileges of the gospel, and has adopted you into his family, and given you his spirit ; I assure you that when I first came with my fellow-labourers to preach the gospel at Thessalonica, I entertained great hope of success, and was fully convinced that great numbers in that opulent and populous city would become converts to the Christian doctrine. For whereas, in some places where this doctrine was published, few miracles were permitted to be wrought, and few spiritual gifts were communicated ; and whereas I was restrained by a divine impulse from exercising my apostolic mission in other places where I intended to preach, I met with no such discouragements nor obstructions when I came to you. But on the contrary I not only plainly taught you the doctrine of Jesus, and argued the divinity of his mission from the prophecies of the Old Testament, which ought to have been satisfactory to the unbelieving Jews ; but I was also enabled, in confirmation of the doctrine which I had in charge, to work various splendid miracles by power communicated to me from above ; and to impart to the new converts those gifts of the holy spirit, which were to themselves and to others the most satisfactory evidence of a divine authority. And by these means the gospel did, as might naturally be expected, triumph over the opposition of its enemies ; and in a short time, like a vessel in full sail and with a prosperous breeze, it made its way with astonishing rapidity and success. Nor is it necessary for me to enter into particular details : you well remember what we were, what we taught, and what wonderful powers we exhibited, in order to excite your attention and to bring you to a proper conviction of the truth of the gospel.

Ch. I.
Ver. 5.

3. This happy conviction of their acceptance with God was fully confirmed by the exemplary conduct of the Thessalonians after their conversion, ver. 6, 7.

And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord⁵, having received the

6.

full motion of a ship, with all her sails :” and he understands it “ either of the abundant confirmation of the Christian doctrine by the gifts of the holy spirit, or of the full conviction produced by this evidence.” “ Their readily embracing the gospel,” says Dr. Benson, “ upon the apostle’s preaching and working miracles, and their having thereupon received the spirit, was the surest proof of their election. God imparted the spirit unto none but those who believed ; i. e. only to his professed people, who were called and chosen.”

⁵ *And of the Lord.]* Mr. Wakefield, upon the authority of the Æthiopic version, leaves out

Ch. I.
Ver. 7.

*word amidst great affliction with joy in the holy spirit*¹, *so that ye became examples to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia*².

The success of the gospel among you was proportioned to the means employed for your conversion. Some among my own countrymen, and many of the Gentiles who had before been worshipers of the true God, and who might therefore be expected to listen to the discoveries of his will, embraced the gospel. And, what is still more worthy of admiration and joy, great numbers even of idolatrous heathen were deeply impressed with the tokens of divine interposition, and became sincere converts to the Christian faith. Yes, my brethren, you became not only proselytes to my doctrine, but imitators of my example; for I once like you was alienated from the gospel. But why do I speak of myself? you became imitators of Jesus himself, your master and mine, our great ensample, our glorious chief. He was a sufferer before he triumphed; and in the prospect of the reward set before him, he bore the cross and despised the shame. You are his faithful followers: you profess his doctrine amidst dangers and persecutions. But, possessed of those gifts of the holy spirit, which are a sure pledge of the truth of the gospel, and of the accomplishment of your glorious expectations, you rejoice even in tribulation. So that you are yourselves become shining examples to the neighbouring churches of the excellence and energy of Christian principles.

4. The apostle expresses great satisfaction in the high reputation which the Thessalonian converts had gained by their faith, their fortitude, and zeal, ver. 8—10.

8. *For, from you hath the word of the Lord resounded*³, *not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith towards God hath*

καί (and), and joins *καὶ Κυρίῳ* to the next clause, which he renders, “receiving the doctrine of the Lord.” Griesbach does not notice this various reading.

¹ *Joy in the holy spirit.*] The gifts of the spirit were a proof of their being the children of God, or his chosen people; and were likewise the pledge of their title to immortality. “Well, therefore,” says Dr. Benson, “might it cause them to rejoice, even in the midst of persecution, Acts v. 41; Rom. xii. 12; Eph. i. 13, 14; Col. i. 11; Rom. viii. 14—17.” “Cum gaudio magno, cum lætitia quæ esset a spiritu sancto effecta, sive, nata ex evangelio quod Paulus Thessalonicensibus tradidisset.” Rosenmuller.

² *Macedonia and Achaia.*] The whole of the countries possessed by the Greeks in Europe were by the Romans reduced to two provinces, Macedonia and Achaia. See Dr. Macknight.

³ *Resounded.*] Grotius observes, that many of the Thessalonians were merchants who travelled into foreign parts for the sake of commerce, and who would naturally spread the intelligence of the extraordinary events which had happened at Thessalonica, of the impression which had been made upon the minds of many of their countrymen, and of the great change which it had produced in their conduct.

spread abroad, so that we need not to say any thing concerning it: For they themselves declare concerning us⁴ what kind of entrance we had among you; and how ye turned to God⁵ from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to expect his Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead; even Jesus, who is our deliverer from impending wrath⁶.

CH. I.
Ver. 9.

10.

The beneficial influence of your example has diffused itself far and wide. For truly, my Christian brethren, the extraordinary change produced in you by the preaching of the gospel, has not only excited the astonishment of your heathen neighbours and your fellow-citizens of every description, but it has been proclaimed abroad through all the adjacent countries, and is become the topic of general conversation and wonder. In our progress from place to place, in the accomplishment of our apostolic mission, it is our usual practice to relate in the towns and cities to which we come, and where we are about to open our ministry, the success which we have met with in those regions through which we have already passed. But with regard to Thessalonica this is quite unnecessary. The report of your conversion to the Christian faith has every where anticipated our intelligence. For whithersoever the citizens of your opulent and populous metropolis are led, either by the affairs of government, or the concerns of commerce, or upon their own private business or amusement, they are all eager to relate the wonderful events which have lately taken place among you. And in particular they recount our appearance in your city, our public teaching, and our extraordinary works; to which they subjoin the amazing change of views, principles, and conduct which this new doctrine and these surprising works have produced upon their fellow-citizens; so that great numbers have been prevailed upon to forsake the religion of their country, and the customs of their ancestors, to abandon the worship of the heathen gods, and the deified heroes, in order to devote themselves to the worship and service of the

⁴ *They themselves, &c.*] “that is,” says Dr. Chandler, “those of Macedonia and Achaia, and other places who know of your conversion: they show of us, ἀπαγγελλεσι, publish and declare concerning us to others, in what manner and with what evidence we preached the gospel to you.” “Those who were with us declare what kind of an admission,” &c. “αὐτοὶ περὶ ὑμῶν.” Philalethes.

⁵ *And how ye turned to God.*] Dr. Benson observes, that “the two fundamental articles of Christianity are here again repeated.”

⁶ *Impending wrath.*] τῆς οργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης. “impending anger.” Philalethes. “the punishment which is to come.” Newcome. “who shall hereafter save us (ῥυσομενον is the reading of some copies) from that wrath that shall finally come upon all who do not believe nor obey the gospel.” Chandler. N.B. Griesbach takes no notice of the various reading which Dr. Chandler suggests. “Hic præsens pro futuro, bis. ῥυομενον pro ῥυσομενον, deinde ἐρχομένης, pro venturæ.” Rosenmuller.

Ch. I.
Ver. 10.

one true God : of that glorious and eternal Being, who is the maker of heaven and earth, and all things therein, and who is the only proper object of religious adoration. And they further report, as a remarkable singularity in the character of these new proselytes, that they all profess to live under the awful expectation of the speedy appearance of a glorious person whom they call their Master and Lord, who, having suffered a violent death as a witness to the truth, was by the power of God raised from the grave, and thus declared to be his first-born Son ; who afterwards ascended to the right hand of God, and is constituted by his heavenly Father the judge both of the living and the dead ; and that the name of this holy and exalted person is Jesus of Nazareth ; who will also most assuredly rescue all who receive and obey his gospel from that vengeance which will in due time inevitably fall upon those who are immersed in the gross and odious vices which prevail in so lamentable a degree in the heathen world. This, my Christian brethren, is the report which is every where circulated concerning you ; a report which is highly to your credit ; and which affords us, your teachers, and your affectionate faithful friends, the most heartfelt satisfaction. And I now mention it to you, that you may be stimulated by it to support the honourable character which you have so justly acquired, and to persevere in your adherence to the Christian faith, and in the practice of Christian virtue.

SECTION II.

Ch. II. *THE APOSTLE asserts the fidelity, the purity, the affection, and disinterestedness with which he and his associates had preached the gospel at Thessalonica, and he appeals to the Thessalonians, and to the Supreme Being himself, to attest the veracity of his declaration. Ch. ii. 1—12.*

1. He reminds them of the courage with which he and his associates opened their ministry at Thessalonica, after the injurious and contumelious treatment which they had endured at Philippi, ver. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. *For yourselves, brethren, know that our entering in among you was not*
2. *in vain*¹. *But though we had before suffered, and had been ignominiously*

¹ *In vain.*] “*κενη*, without influence on your belief, ch. i. 9 ; and on your practice, ch. i. 7, 8, ii. 13, 14.” Newcome. Chandler observes that the word signifies either fruitless or deceitful :

treated², as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God³ to declare to you the gospel of God⁴, amidst great opposition⁵.

Ch. II.
Ver. 2.

You cannot, my friends, be surprised that the circumstances of our mission among you, and of the extraordinary success which attended it, should have become, as I have just mentioned to you, the topics of general conversation through all the neighbouring countries; for you yourselves well recollect all the circumstances of it, both with respect to the character and conduct of the teachers, and the number and zeal of the converts to their new and sublime doctrine. You know that we neither came with false pretences to a divine authority, nor were our labours among you ineffectual and fruitless. You had heard of the savage cruelty with which we had been treated at Philippi; and how, though we were Roman citizens, the magistrates had presumed to violate our sacred privileges by inflicting stripes upon us, and that even without hearing what we had to say in our own defence. And when, sensible of their misconduct, they requested us to depart, we came immediately to Thessalonica; and, while we were yet smarting with the wounds we had received at Philippi, we boldly, publicly, and without any artifice or disguise, as became the messengers of the God of truth, taught at Thessalonica the same novel and obnoxious doctrine for which we had lately suffered so much at Philippi. And in the exercise of our ministry among you we met, as usual, with great opposition: first from the Jews, and afterwards, at their instigation, from the heathen rabble; in consequence of which

in the former sense it connects with the last verses in the foregoing chapter, and in the latter sense with the verse immediately following.

² *Ignominiously treated.*] ὑβρισθεντες, "had suffered bodily injury." Wakefield. The history of this infamous usage is given, Acts xvi., and the judicious reader will observe how the history and the epistle illustrate and confirm each other. It was considered as the highest indignity to beat a Roman citizen with rods, and the Porcian law expressly exempted them from it. One of the heaviest charges of Cicero against Verres is the frequent inflicting of this disgraceful punishment upon Roman citizens. See Chandler on the text.

³ *Bold in our God.*] επαρρησιασαμεθα. "This word," says Dr. Chandler, "sometimes signifies, 'to speak with courage, and void of fear;' sometimes, 'to speak openly and plainly, without ambiguity or disguise;' sometimes, 'to speak in the most public manner before others;' and sometimes, 'to speak with full persuasion and confidence of encouragement and support;' and the word seems to take in all these kindred senses, which the history also justifies, Acts xvii. 1—3." *In our God.* "The gods of the heathen," as Dr. Benson observes, "were not able to inspire their votaries with such courage and constancy in promoting religion and virtue."

⁴ *We were bold in our God to declare the gospel of God.*] "The repetition of the word *God* is truly emphatical, and with the highest elegance and propriety." Chandler.

⁵ *Amidst great opposition.*] εν πολλῳ αγωνι. "with much earnestness." Newcome. "in so great a struggle." Wakefield. "in much danger." Chrysostom, Erasmus, Grotius, Benson, Raphelius. "The word signifies 'great opposition,' or, 'great hazard.' Phil. i. 30." Chandler.

Ch. II.
Ver. 2.

we were exposed to great hazard, and ultimately obliged to withdraw from the city. And you cannot but have remarked that the part which we have acted is very different from that which the boastful teachers of the heathen philosophy would have done in similar circumstances. The reason is, that we placed our confidence not in senseless idols, but in a God who is omnipotent to protect his faithful servants; and in publishing to you the joyful tidings of salvation we were conscious that we were acting in obedience to his authority, and fulfilling the high commission with which we were intrusted.

2. The apostle asserts the competency, the purity, and the veracity of himself and his associates in the ministry of the gospel, ver. 3, 4.

3. *For, our exhortation was not of error¹, nor of impurity², nor with de-*
4. *ceit³. But as we were approved by God⁴ to be intrusted with the gospel,*
we speak accordingly, not to please men⁵, but that God who approveth our
hearts⁶.

The characters of those who profess to teach the fashionable systems of heathen philosophy are sufficiently notorious. Many of them are themselves bewildered in the labyrinths of error. Many of them, both by their instruction

¹ *Of error.*] *πλανης.* “we ourselves being deceived.” Newcome. Dr. Chandler observes, that “in these and the following verses the apostle plainly refers to certain teachers who were chargeable with these immoral views and practices;” and he supposes that the heathen philosophers are principally, if not solely, alluded to, both as the Thessalonian Christians, being chiefly converted heathen, must be ignorant of Jewish controversies, and because “these words are the plainest description that can be of the generality of the heathen philosophers, who were chargeable with every one of the corrupt and the mean practices which the apostle disclaims.”

² *Nor of impurity.*] “nor with impure and sensual doctrines or views. See 2 Pet. ii. 10, 14; Jude 4, 8; Rev. ii. 6, 15. Hammond, Wall.” Newcome. “The philosophers were in these respects infamously criminal.” Chandler. Some by *ακαθαρσιας* understand *insincerity* only, and Bentley conjectures that the true reading is *ανθρωπαρεσκιας*, *men-pleasing*, as better suiting the connexion; but this reading is unauthorized, and the preceding interpretation is unusual, and both are unnecessary. See Benson and Bowyer.

³ *Nor with deceit.*] *εν δολω*, “not with an intention to deceive others.” Newcome.—“Lucian says of the philosophers, that the impudence of their hypocrisy was intolerable.” Chandler.—“They used no craft or artifice; did not artfully conceal some parts and adulterate others; did not assert the necessity of the Gentile Christians observing the law of Moses in order to please the Jews; did not model Christianity according to the old heathen religion, or contrive methods to make them easy in their vices, to draw in the Gentiles.” Benson.

⁴ *Approved by God.*] *δεδοκιμασμεθα.* “This word,” says Dr. Chandler, “has a stronger signification than that of mere allowance, and denotes fully to approve.” See Rom. i. 28, xiv. 22.

⁵ *To please men.*] “St. Paul strove to please men as far as he could honestly, and for their real good, Rom. xv. 2, 1 Cor. x. 33; but he never studied to please men, when thereby he must have been unfaithful, and displeased God. Gal. i. 10; 1 Cor. iv. 1, vii. 25.” Benson.

⁶ *Who approveth, &c.*] “The word is the same as before, and should be rendered, *who approveth our hearts*: who knows the simplicity of our views, and approveth them.” Chandler.

and their conduct, countenance the most licentious and abominable practices ; and many, to please their hearers, teach doctrines which they themselves do not believe. In short, they are influenced by the most selfish motives, and consider themselves as accountable to no one for their conduct. But this, you well know, was not our character. Whatever our enemies may believe or report concerning us, we are conscious that our doctrine is of divine authority. No indulgence was granted by us to that dissoluteness of manners which is so prevalent in the heathen world. Nor did we dare to conceal or to disguise any part of the message which we had in charge, in order to make it more palatable to our hearers. But having had the unspeakable honour of being selected by God himself, as proper instruments to be employed by him in publishing the joyful tidings of peace and good-will to mankind, we strenuously exert ourselves to maintain this honourable character, and to perform, with the strictest fidelity, the duties of our important office. And with this object fully and continually in view, though we do not desire to give unnecessary offence, and are even anxious, as far as may be consistent with duty, to gratify the taste and to conform to the innocent prejudices of our hearers ; yet, upon the whole, we feel little solicitude for human applause, and are supremely desirous of approving ourselves to Him who is witness to all the thoughts and purposes of the heart ; who is the only infallible judge of character, and in whose sight we cheerfully hope that our conduct is regarded with complacency, however we may be censured and condemned by men.

Ch. II.
Ver. 4.

3. The apostle further affirms that neither he nor his associates were influenced by pride, covetousness, or vain-glory, in preaching the gospel at Thessalonica, ver. 5—7.

For neither at any time⁷ did we use flattering speech⁸, as ye know, nor

5.

⁷ *For neither at any time.*] Dr. Benson supposes, that the apostle had been charged by his enemies with the faults of which he clears himself in the beginning of this chapter, viz. of imposture, impurity, guile, flattery, covetousness and vainglory.

⁸ *Use flattering speech.*] εν λογωκολακειας εγενηθημεν. “a very correct and emphatical manner of writing. It signifies, either to use flattering speeches, or to be reported of as given to flattery : q. d. you neither heard me doing it, nor ever charged me with it.” Chandler. Benson’s interpretation is preferable ; which he says “is the sense usually given by all commentators, ancient and modern.” And he justly asks, “what occasion there was for his solemn appeal to the Thessalonians themselves (*as ye know*) if some persons had not suggested such accusations.” He does not say, as Dr. Chandler (who is unaccountably prejudiced against Dr. Benson) insinuates, that the construction given by Hammond, Le Clerc, and Chandler, is bad Greek ; but he has said and proved that the passages they quote do not justify the sense they give to the apo-

Ch. II.
Ver. 6.

- a pretence for covetousness, God is witness*¹. Nor from men sought we glory; neither from you, nor from others². When we might have assumed authority³ as apostles of Christ, we were gentle⁴ among you.

There are some teachers who are desirous at any price to secure the applause and the favour of their hearers; there are others whose object is to enrich themselves at their expense; and there are some who are ambitious of the reputation of superior talents, and the pride of rank and dignity; and there are not wanting those who have accused us of being governed by a similar spirit. These charges we repel with indignation; and we appeal to you, and to God himself, to attest our innocence. Much as we loved you, and earnestly desirous as we were to gain your attention and your affection, you will bear us witness that we never attempted to secure this object by any mean compliances with your humours and prejudices, or by flattering you in your errors and your vices. And that we did not, under pretence of instructing you in the Christian doctrine, and teaching you the way of salvation, mean to make a gain of you, and to become rich by your liberality, God is witness, who knows the disinterested spirit with which we have embarked in this glorious service. And we were equally clear of the imputation of ambition and the desire of applause. We did not court the admiration either of you or the public. We were above such unworthy motives.

style's language. And surely, when the words of the text admit of two senses, Dr. Chandler's usual method of attributing both to the apostle cannot generally be correct.

¹ *As ye know—God is witness.*] How far the apostle had flattered his hearers, they themselves could testify; but how far he was influenced by avarice and self-interest, while he pretended to have no object in view but the benefit of his hearers, could be known only to God.—“*προφασις*,” says Dr. Chandler, “is a *pretence*, or *colour* to cover over, and more securely carry on, any secret design. The philosophers were notorious and infamous for their covetousness.”

² *Neither from you; nor from others.*] “If his enemies objected,” says Dr. Benson, “‘Though you sought not glory from the Thessalonians, yet you love the admiration and applause of mankind,’ to such an objection the apostle replies by denying the charge. And indeed that would have been but a poor reward for all their astonishing labours, and great fatigues, their cold, hunger and nakedness, their buffetings and scourgings, their insults, dangers, and the many and grievous sufferings to which their faithful and assiduous preaching of the gospel exposed them.”

³ *Assumed authority.*] *ἐν βαρεὶ εἶναι*. Dr. Benson and Dr. Chandler have shown that *βαρεὶς* is used by classical writers to express gravity, dignity, and authority; and this sense is unquestionably best suited to the connexion. Dr. Chandler remarks that the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses are ill pointed; “and by this means (says he) one of the most beautiful and moving passages I ever met with in the whole course of my reading is almost quite kept out of the reader's view.” He rectifies the punctuation, which is also adopted by Griesbach, and which I have followed.

⁴ *Gentle.*] *ἡπιος*. “This word,” says Dr. Chandler, “signifies *humane*, *indulgent*. Profane writers make it the epithet of a father, to signify the most indulgent and affectionate father. Helena, speaking of Hector, says of him, *πάτερ ὡς ἡπιος αἰεὶ*. *Iliad*. Ω. ver. 770.

Indeed, as an apostle of Christ, who received my commission immediately from him, who possessed supernatural gifts and powers in a degree equal to the very chief of the apostles, and who was particularly designated to the high office of apostle of the Gentiles, I might very consistently have claimed the respect due to my superior rank. But this was not my ambition. I chose to associate among you as an equal and a friend, or rather, as an indulgent father. And, instead of affecting airs of superiority, I was mild and gentle in my behaviour to you all.

Ch. II.
Ver. 7.

4. The apostle reminds the Thessalonians that his whole conduct towards them was, in the highest degree, affectionate and kind, ver. 7, 8.

As a nursing-mother⁵ cherishes⁶ her own children, so we, affectionately loving you⁷, would with pleasure⁸ have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only, but even our own lives, because ye were dear to us⁹. —7, 8.

Indeed, my friends, so far was I from desiring to usurp any undue authority over you, that I felt no emotions towards you but those of kindness and compassion. I even felt for you as a tender mother for the helpless infant at her breast; who not only delights to impart to her beloved babe the warmth and nourishment that it needs, but would also, with pleasure, sacrifice her own life for the preservation of her child. So, likewise, did I, animated with equal tenderness and affection for you, first impart to you, in

⁵ *As a nursing mother.*] So Mr. Wakefield; and it is evident, as all must observe who consult the original, that the apostle is speaking of a mother who nurses and suckles her own child. See Benson and Macknight.

⁶ *Cherishes.*] θαλπη. "The Greek," says Dr. Chandler, "is more emphatical than our translation, 'cherishes and suckles her own children, warms them in her bosom, and feeds them with her milk.'"

⁷ *Affectionately loving you.*] ἡμετρομενοι. "ἡμερει, επιθυμει, δειλει. Hesych. Non tantum a poetis usurpatur, ut vult Grotius. Vid. Raphel." Chandler.

⁸ *Would with pleasure.*] ευδοκουμεν. See Chandler.

⁹ *Ye were dear to us.*] "How tender, how engaging (says Dr. Chandler) are these expressions of this divine apostle! The fondness of an indulgent father to his children is very great: the tenderness of a mother is yet stronger. It is peculiarly strong to their tender infants, but strongest of all to them when they cherish and warm them in their bosoms, and especially when they hang upon the breast, and are suckled with their milk. Nature cannot furnish out an image of greater tenderness than this: such was our apostle to his Thessalonians. He considers *them* as in the infancy of their conversion; himself as the tender mother nourishing and cherishing them; *the gospel of God* as the milk with which he fed them; his *very soul and life* as what he was willing to part with for their safety and benefit. He could die for them, if their preservation and welfare required it. Could the fondest passion of the tenderest mother carry her further, or prompt her to do more for the helpless infant drawing in life and warmth and nourishment from her breast? I think nothing can exceed the elegance, the strength, the tender passion, the moving affection of this description; and that a man must have no bowels that does not find them moved, by so fine, so lively, and warm a scene."

Ch. II.
Ver. 8.

the midst of difficulties and dangers, the sincere milk of the gospel, the word of truth and salvation; and with equal pleasure would I now, for your sakes, sacrifice life itself, if this should be necessary, to secure your interest in the invaluable blessings of the Christian covenant. Believe me, then, when I assure you that I feel the strongest attachment to you; and suffer not the injurious calumnies of our enemies to excite in your minds any unfavourable suspicions concerning me.

5. The apostle suggests to their recollection the example of industry which he had set them, in labouring for his own subsistence while he was employed in preaching the gospel to them, ver. 9.

9. *Moreover*¹, *ye remember, brethren, our labour and toil*²; how, *working night and day that we might not be burthensome*³ to any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

In an opulent and commercial city like yours, the enemies of the gospel are disposed to calumniate the serious professors of the Christian religion, as men who neglect their secular concerns; and to upbraid the teachers of it as encouraging idleness, both by their doctrine and example. But you recollect, my brethren, that our conduct while we exercised our ministry among you gave no countenance to this foul aspersion. For though, while we devote our time to the instruction of others, we have a right to a decent main-

¹ *Moreover.*] *γάρ*, introducing a collateral observation.

² *Labour and toil.*] The apostle is here evidently speaking of the pains which he and his companions took in working for a subsistence. See Chandler.

³ *That we might not be burthensome.*] Dr. Benson observes here, that "ministers have a right to a maintenance from the people to whom they preach; and it is not their duty in all cases to labour for bread with their own hands. This appears both from reason and from scripture. St. Paul often gave up his just rights, either, 1.) That he might give no occasion to charge him with covetous and worldly views; or, 2.) That he might cut off all occasion from false apostles to claim a maintenance from his example; or, 3.) That idle and slothful Christians might not pretend from his example to vindicate their idleness." Dr. Benson adds, that it was the custom of the Jews to teach their children a trade, even though they gave them a liberal education. Acts xviii. 3.

To these observations of Dr. Benson's I would take leave to add what appears to be at least equally just: that where the persons who enjoy the benefit of a minister's instructions either cannot or will not raise a competency to support his family, it is neither criminal nor disgraceful in a minister to use any honourable means for his own support; and that it would be neither improper nor undesirable that young men who are educating for the ministry should also acquire the knowledge of some profession or occupation, by which they might maintain themselves and their families in a decent and reputable manner. Dr. Benson also remarks the propriety and decorum of the apostle's not noticing to the Thessalonians, who were probably poor, the supplies which he and his associates occasionally received from Philippi during their residence at Thessalonica; and which he very properly mentions with gratitude in his letter to the Philippians, Phil. iv. 16.

tenance from those for whose benefit we labour, yet we were far from insisting upon this right while we resided among you. And indeed you cannot but remember, that while we employed the greater part of the day in teaching both publicly and privately the important truths of divine revelation, the remainder of our time was usually spent in hard labour for our own subsistence; and that to this end we encroached even upon the hours of necessary repose; that so we might not put you to inconvenient expense in maintaining us, and that we might preclude the cavils of those who were disposed to represent us either as idle or as mercenary.

Ch. II.
Ver. 9.

6. He reminds the Thessalonians of the piety and sanctity of the preachers of the gospel, and how earnestly it had been recommended to them to follow the example of their teachers, ver. 10—12.

Ye are witnesses, and God⁴ is witness, how holily, and righteously, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe⁵: as ye know how we exhorted⁶, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father his children, that ye should walk in a manner worthy of God, who inviteth you into his glorious kingdom⁷.

10.

11.

12.

⁴ *Ye are witnesses, and God.*] “A very solemn appeal this,” says Dr. Chandler, “upon a very important occasion; and a noble period, full of majesty and grace.”

⁵ *How holily, &c.*] “*holily* towards God, *righteously* towards men, *unblameably*, i. e. without giving any just occasion of complaint in the manner of our instruction, or in the methods we made use of to bring you to the acknowledgement of the truth.” Chandler.

⁶ *Exhorted.*] *ἡμεν* is to be understood after *παρακαλεντες*. Grotius mentions it as a Hebrew idiom; but Benson and Chandler, and before them Blackwall, notice it as an ellipsis not uncommon in the best Greek authors.

⁷ *Worthy of God, &c.*] “How affectionate, how engaging, how powerful,” says Dr. Chandler, “this manner of instruction! The character of a father implies tenderness and authority. As such he exhorts them, he comforts them, he charges them; *μαρτυρημενοι*, *beseeking* and *conjuring* them in the most solemn manner; and testifying to them the absolute necessity that they should walk worthy of God.” “*Kingdom and glory*,” says Dr. Benson, “are put by a usual hendiadys for *glorious kingdom*. The glory in God’s temporal kingdom was the shechelah, that refulgent cloud which resided between the two cherubim, overshadowing the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies, Exod. xiii. 21, 22. To that the apostle seems here to allude; but the Christian church has no such external visible glory. Its glory is truth, charity, and holiness.” He adds, that “Two motives are here suggested to induce the Christians at Thessalonica to live a holy life. 1.) The nature and character of the true God whose worshipers they now were. 2.) This holy God had called them into his glorious kingdom, the Christian church, from a state of ignorance, idolatry, and vice, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.”

“If the most unquestioned indications of an upright mind in this epistle,” says Dr. Priestley, “be properly attended to, (and I will venture to say there is no instance upon record of any hypocrite writing in this manner,) and it be compared with the equally unquestionable zeal of the apostle in preaching the gospel, and the marks of a *sound mind* in conducting himself with the greatest prudence and judgement, a conviction of the truth of Christianity will be the necessary result. Let any unbeliever account for the character, the conduct, and the mode of

Ch. II.
Ver. 12.

We are very sensible that there are many who are disposed to traduce our characters, and to represent us as impious and wicked men, who, under a pretence of a divine commission, are accomplishing their own base and sinister designs. But of such criminal views and conduct our consciences acquit us; and you, my friends, amongst whom we lately resided, and who were witnesses to our whole conduct, will give your verdict in our favour. But you could only witness our external conduct. There is a Being who searches the heart; and to him we humbly but confidently appeal for the purity of our motives, and the sanctity of our conduct. He knows the reverence of our hearts with regard to himself, the rectitude of our behaviour to our fellow-creatures, and our entire freedom from every thing deserving of censure, whether in doctrine or practice, in our intercourse with you, who received the Christian doctrine. And you remember, my dear friends and children in the gospel, what paternal vigilance and tenderness we exercised over you: exhorting some, comforting others, and earnestly pressing it upon all to regulate your conduct agreeably to your Christian profession. You have renounced idolatry, and are become worshipers of the true and living God: act always as in his presence, and make it your supreme concern to serve and please him. He has invited you, though heathen, to become subjects of that glorious kingdom which he has established in the world: a kingdom not dignified, indeed, with external splendour, but glorious in knowledge, in holiness, and in peace: you have accepted the heavenly call. Prize highly your inestimable privilege; and show by your whole conduct that you are true and approved members of this holy and honourable community.

SECTION III.

THE APOSTLE expresses his gratitude to God for the fortitude and zeal of the Thessalonian converts, in a season of severe persecution; and denounces the approaching judgements of God upon the Jewish nation.
Ch. ii. 13—16.

1. The apostle gives thanks to God for the success of the gospel at Thes-

writing of this apostle, upon any other supposition, if he can. If any person thinks that he can, I will venture to say he either has not duly attended to all the circumstances, or has little knowledge of human nature."

salonica, and the good effect it produced upon those who were converted to the faith, ver. 13. Ch. II.

For this cause also we give thanks to God continually¹, that when ye received the doctrine concerning God which ye heard from us², ye accepted not a doctrine of men, but a doctrine of God³, as in truth it is; which also powerfully operateth in you who believe. Ver. 13.

And now, my brethren, having reminded you of the circumstances in which we first preached the gospel at Thessalonica, and of the temper and spirit which we manifested among you, I rejoice in the recollection of your own conduct upon the same interesting occasion. To many, indeed, our arguments were unavailing, and upon their minds the miraculous powers which we exercised made no valuable impression: but we bless God that this neglect of the gospel was not universal. We can never forget the candour and seriousness with which you listened to our instructions, as messengers of God; and in our daily devotions we never omit to offer up our thanksgivings to God, for your firm conviction of the truth, and for your public fearless profession of the doctrine which you heard. And we also bless God that you had good reason for your conduct. The doctrine you embraced is not the invention of man; it is, and will most assuredly appear to be, the truth of God, and a truth of the greatest practical importance. You are yourselves, my friends, the living proofs of it: no other doctrine could have inspired that fortitude and zeal, and cheerful hope, which you have experienced and manifested in the trying circumstances in which you have been placed.

2. The apostle traces a resemblance between the circumstances of the Thessalonians and those of the Jewish converts in Judea; and after describ-

¹ *For this cause, &c.*] See ch. i. 2. The apostle having stated his own views and conduct, and those of his associates, when they first introduced the gospel at Thessalonica, now enlarges upon the effect which it had produced upon the Thessalonians, and shows that their mission had not been in vain. Ch. ii. 1. See Benson.

² *Doctrine of God, &c.*] *λογον ακοης παρ' ημων τε Θεου*, the word of the report of, or concerning God. Comp. Heb. iv. 2, Matt. xiv. 1; the doctrine which they heard concerning God from the apostles. This Dr. Chandler thinks to be the true critical meaning of the place. The word *received* occurs a second time improperly in the common version; the words in the original being different. "The first word, *παραλαβοντες*, signifies 'taking any thing proposed into consideration, so as to pass a proper judgement upon it.' The second, *εδεξασθε*, signifies 'to approve and embrace in consequence of serious examination.'" See Chandler and Benson.

³ *Not a doctrine, &c.*] Dr. Chandler thinks that the particle *as* in the common version is twice inserted without any reason; the sense being much better without it. "The apostle," he observes, "had double reason of thankfulness to God: that the doctrine he preached concerning God was really from him; and that he had been instrumental to persuade the Thessalonians to embrace it."

Ch. II.
Ver. 13.

ing the character of the unbelieving Jews, he concludes with a solemn denunciation of the approaching judgements of God upon that perverse and incorrigible people, ver. 14—16.

14. *For ye, brethren, are become like¹ the churches of God in Judea which are in Christ Jesus²: inasmuch as ye also have suffered from your own countrymen³ the same things which they have from the Jews.*

That the gospel of Christ has been cordially embraced by you, and has produced its genuine effect upon you, is evident from the firmness and fortitude which you have discovered under the persecutions which you have endured. For your situation at Thessalonica bears a very near resemblance to that of the Christian converts in Judea. Your fellow-citizens, though heathen, and as such in general indifferent to the rise and progress of new opinions and sects, have been instigated by the Jews to persecute you with as much rancour as the Jews in Judea persecute the believers there. And indeed I am constrained to bear a sad and reluctant testimony to the wickedness and the ruin of my unhappy countrymen.

15. *Who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets⁴, and have persecuted*
16. *us, and who please not God⁵, and are against all men⁶, not suffering us⁷*

¹ *Are become like.*] μιμηται. So Wakefield. Gr. imitators. “Cætus Christianorum Judaici sc. Palæstinenses, Judæorum odia magis experti sunt, quam ecclesiæ regionum ceterarum Asiaticarum, et Europæarum; nam Judæi præcipue erant ii, qui Christianos persequabantur.” Rosenmüller. “as you yourselves are a plain instance.” Pyle.

² *Which are in Christ Jesus.*] which believe in Christ, which profess the Christian religion: “a defective form of expression which must be supplied in some such way. They worship one God and believe in Christ Jesus.” Chandler.

³ *Your own countrymen.*] The heathen idolaters considering the Christians at first only as a sect of Jews, did not give themselves any trouble about them till they were instigated by the Jews. This was particularly the case at Thessalonica and Berea, &c. Acts xvii. 5, 13.

⁴ *The prophets.*] The word ιδιαις, *their own*, is omitted in the manuscripts of best authority, and in the Vulgate and other ancient versions. It was probably a marginal gloss. See Griesbach.

⁵ *Please not God.*] A meiosis, by which much more is understood than the words express. The apostle means that the conduct of the Jews was in the highest degree displeasing to God. See Chandler and Benson.

⁶ *Are against all men.*] “ἐναντίοι denotes *enemies*; in a state of hostile opposition.” Chandler. This was the character which the Jews bore among the heathen, whom it is well known that they regarded with hatred and contempt.

Non monstrare vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti;

Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.—JUVENAL. Sat. xiv.

Adversus alios omnes hostile odium. Tacitus. See Elsner. “against Gentiles, whether converted or unconverted; and against converted Jews.” Newcome. This severe description of the Jews is confirmed by Josephus, who frequently calls them θεοσυγείς, *haters of God*; and who, in a passage which has often been cited from his *Jewish War*, b. vi. c. 13. § 6. declares that “he thinks that if the Romans had delayed to take vengeance on these wretches, they would either have been swallowed up by an earthquake, or that the city would have been swept away by a deluge; or that they would have partaken of the thunders of Sodom; for that they were a more impious generation than those who suffered these calamities.” See Chandler.

⁷ *Not suffering us.*] κωλυόντων. So Wakefield. *forbidding, hindering*. “The meaning is,

*to declare salvation to the Gentiles: thus continually filling up the measure of their sins*⁸. *But wrath is overtaking them*⁹ *to utter destruction*¹⁰. Ch. II. Ver. 16.

With regret I say it; but truth compels me to declare, that the crimes of my deluded countrymen have now nearly reached their utmost limit, and that their ruin is impending and inevitable. For they have been the murderers of Jesus, our lord and master, whom they ought to have received as their promised Messiah, and who gave the most ample proof of his divine legation: yet even him they delivered up to the Roman power, under a false charge of treason and blasphemy, and insisted upon his public crucifixion. The prophets who foretold the mission of Christ, had been treated by their predecessors with similar cruelty. And if we, the apostles and messengers of Jesus, and the authorized witnesses of his resurrection, have hitherto escaped, it has been owing to want of power, not of inclination on their part: for they have beaten and imprisoned us, and forbidden us to teach the doctrine of Christ; and some of our number have even been put to death. Thus they are acting in a manner most highly offensive to the Supreme Being, whom they profess to venerate, while they oppose his will and destroy his holy and authorized messengers. They are the enemies of the human race; holding all mankind in contempt and abhorrence, though equally with themselves the creatures and children of God. And this malignity of spirit they evince in a way which renders it doubly odious, by giving every obstruction in their power to the promulgation of the gospel among the Gentiles, and refusing them admission into the kingdom and family of God. Thus they add crime to crime, without any interruption or remission, till, the measure of their iniquities being full, divine justice will no longer forbear to strike. And

⁸ not forbidding us to preach in order to their salvation, but to preach the doctrine of the possibility of their salvation by faith alone." Chandler.

⁸ *Filling up, &c.*] "This," says Dr. Benson, "is an allusion to filling up a vessel to the brim. The vessel was filled a great way before, but this filled it up quite. A similar allusion is used Gen. xv. 16, Matt. xxiii. 32."

⁹ *Is overtaking them.*] εφθασε "literally, hath overtaken, on account of its nearness and certainty." Wakefield. "That desolation was drawing nigh when the apostle wrote this epistle; and the destruction of their temple, city, and nation, happened within twenty years after." Benson.

¹⁰ *To utter destruction.*] εις τελος. "finally, at last." H. Stephens, Grotius, Knatchbull, Benson. "to consummation, to utter destruction." Newcome, and others. So LXX. Numb. xvii. 13; Josh. vii. 24, x. 20; Job vi. 9; Amos ix. 8; 2 Chron. xii. 12. "Wrath is coming on them to the full. Such wrath as shall perfect and consummate their destruction." Chandler. This epistle was written A.D. 52. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple happened about twenty years afterwards. This event the apostle foreknew either by inspiration, or by the recorded prophecy of Jesus previous to his crucifixion. Mr. Wakefield translates the words, "complete punishment is overtaking them."

Ch. II.
Ver. 16.

dreadful indeed will their approaching catastrophe be. The denunciations of the crucified prophet will be literally fulfilled. The ruin of the nation will be complete. And the awful consummation is at hand.

SECTION IV.

THE APOSTLE, having been disappointed in his intention of making the Thessalonians a visit, and having sent Timothy to Thessalonica to learn the state of their affairs, expresses the highest satisfaction in the report which that evangelist had made concerning their perseverance in the faith, and their affection to him: and he concludes with testifying his earnest desire to visit them, and his best wishes for their establishment in faith and holiness. Ch. ii. 17—iii. 13.

1. Having been compelled to leave them abruptly, he was earnestly desirous of seeing them again, but had hitherto been prevented from executing his purpose, ver. 17, 18.

17. *Now we, brethren¹, having been bereaved of you² at an hour's warning³, in person, not in heart, have earnestly endeavoured with great desire⁴*
18. *to see your face. Accordingly, we intended to come to you, even I Paul, more than once, but Satan hindered us⁵.*

My dear brethren, you recollect how suddenly, and with how little pre-

¹ *Now we, brethren.*] Dr. Benson observes that "the apostle has called his converts at Thessalonica, brethren, beloved, or beloved brethren, no less than seventeen times in this epistle: whereby he not only testified his very ardent affection for them, but acknowledged the Gentile as well as Jewish converts for Christian brethren."

² *Bereaved of you.*] ἀπορφανισθέντες. See Wakefield. "Ορφανος, ὁ γονέων ἐσηρημένος, καὶ τέκνων." Hesychius. "He compares the uneasiness he was under," says Dr. Chandler, "to the distress of a father robbed of, and torn from, his children, at an hour's warning, and forced to leave them in circumstances of the most helpless danger."

³ *At an hour's warning.*] πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας. So Dr. Chandler, and unquestionably right; though this sense is overlooked, as he observes, by almost all interpreters. Mr. Wakefield's version is, "at a moment's warning." It is not true that the apostle was separated from them for a short time only, for it was six years before he saw them again; and if it had been fact, it would have been beside the apostle's purpose to have mentioned it.

⁴ *Earnestly endeavoured, &c.*] The apostle expresses with great emphasis his earnest desire to see the Thessalonians again. "The word," says Dr. Chandler, "signifies, 'I diligently endeavoured.' To raise the idea, he adds, 'I more abundantly endeavoured;' and to make his diligence appear as strong as words could do it, concludes, 'I more abundantly endeavoured to see you with great desire.'" "Amat Paulus, vocabula per se augmentia, amplius augere." Grotius.

vious notice, I was torn from you as a father from the children of his affection, in consequence of the tumult which was raised at the instigation of the Jews. But though I was personally compelled to withdraw from you, my heart still remained with you, and my tenderest affections are fixed upon you: so that ever since I left you I have never ceased to devise the means of gratifying my ardent desire to visit you again. Hitherto, however, my efforts have been fruitless: for though I Paul, your teacher and apostle, have repeatedly intended and endeavoured to take a journey to Thessalonica, some impediment or other has always occurred to prevent me; and particularly the malignity of the Jews, and the peculiar enmity which they harbour against me, and which would lead them to sacrifice my life, if they could once get me into their power.

Ch. II.
Ver. 18.

2. The apostle states the delight he felt in the prospect of meeting his Thessalonian converts at the coming of Christ, ver. 19, 20.

For what is our hope⁶ or joy, or crown of triumph⁷, in the presence of our Lord Jesus⁸ at his coming? Are not even ye⁹? Ye are indeed our glory and our joy¹⁰.

19.

20.

If it should be in my power, I will make another effort to visit you soon;

⁵ *Satan hindered us.*] "wicked men, the instruments of Satan." Newcome. The word Satan signifies *adversary*, and in the Old Testament is constantly used in this sense. In the New Testament it occurs thirty-three times; and commonly expresses, the principle of opposition personified, whatever be the cause or the object of the obstruction. Paul's paralytic disorder is called Satan, 2 Cor. xii. 7, because it obstructed his preaching the gospel. Peter is called *Satan*, Matt. xiii. 26, because he contradicted what Jesus had just declared. *Satan* sometimes signifies the heathen power, and sometimes the persecuting power; but it never signifies what it is usually understood to express, the chief of apostates and fallen angels.—Dr. Priestley explains it, "one adversary or other has prevented me." "*Impedivit autem hoc Satanas, injecta ei necessitate disputandi sæpius cum Stoicis et Epicureis qui Athenis erant.*" Grotius. "The enemy here intended," says Dr. Benson, "was evidently the unbelieving Jews at Thessalonica." It was some unknown impediment.

⁶ *For what is our hope.*] Dr. Chandler observes that it is "uncertain whether the apostle here refers to the crown of triumph worn by the conqueror, or to the garland of victory in the games." Dr. Benson remarks, that "as Paul expected to know his own converts in the great day, we may therefore hope to know our friends in a future state."

⁷ *Or crown of triumph.*] *καυχήσεως*. So Wakefield. "a crown of which a man boasts." Le Clerc. "*Vocatur corona, non quotidiana, sed quæ diebus summæ lætitiæ ad eximium ornatum sumitur. Sic Paulum ornabant tam præclaræ per Macedoniam structæ ab ipso ecclesiæ.*" Grotius.

⁸ *In the presence of our Lord Jesus.*] The received text adds *Christ*; but this word is wanting in the Alexandrine, Clermont, and Corbey manuscripts, and in the Syriac, Vulgate, and other versions. See Griesbach; who however retains it in his text.

⁹ *Are not even ye?*] "*Construi hæc sic debent.*" Grotius. See also Chandler and Benson.

¹⁰ *Ye are indeed, &c.*] So Mr. Wakefield. The old English version is, *Yes, ye are indeed our glory and joy*. "The particle *γάρ*, which we render *for*, should have been translated *even*. For this use of the particle, see Herodotus *Hist.* I. i. 8, V. iii. 12." Chandler.

Ch. II.
Ver. 20.

but I may perhaps be again disappointed; and possibly in this world I may never have another opportunity of seeing you again. But there is a day advancing when we shall be sure to meet: it is the day of our Lord and Master Jesus, when he shall return to raise the dead and to judge the world. And to what think ye that I look forward with delightful anticipation, as the brightest crown, the most transporting bliss of that triumphant day?—It is to the happiness of meeting you, my beloved brethren, my dear Thessalonian converts, my joy and pride, at the tribunal of our honoured Lord and judge—approved, acknowledged, and rewarded by him. Yes; it is to meet, never to part any more. This will be happiness indeed. And of this triumph, blessed be God, it is not in the power of our worst and most inveterate enemies either to hinder or to deprive us.

3. The apostle, moved by the tender anxiety which he felt on their account, had sent Timothy from Athens, to visit, to console, and to encourage them, ch. iii. 1—3.

Ch. III.
Ver. 1.

2. *So then, being no longer able to refrain¹, we willingly acquiesced² in being left at Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother, and a fellow-worker with God in the gospel of Christ³, to support and encourage you⁴ concerning your fidelity⁵; that none of you⁶ may be moved⁷ by these our afflictions, for ye yourselves know that we are appointed to this⁸.*

¹ *Refrain.*] “*ἡσυχῶ* properly signifies to cover: here it signifies, to suppress the impatience of our desires.” Chandler. “being able to endure no longer.” Wakefield.

² *Willingly acquiesced.*] See Chandler. “we have submitted.” Wakefield. “I cheerfully preferred.” Benson. The word *εὐδοκῆσαμεν* expresses the readiness with which the apostle acquiesced in being left by himself at Athens.

³ *Timothy, &c.*] The copies read these clauses variously: I adopt the reading of Griesbach.

⁴ *Support and encourage.*] So Wakefield. *Παρακαλεσαι* signifies both to *exhort* and *comfort*: the apostle might intend to include both significations.

⁵ *Your fidelity.*] See ver. 5: not concerning their faith, but their firm adherence to their profession.

⁶ *That none of you.*] *τῶ μηδενᾶ.* The best copies read *το μηδενᾶ* for *εἰς το κ. τ. λ.* Griesbach: see ver. 13. Benson and Newcome.

⁷ *Be moved.*] “*σαινέσθαι*, *proprie adulator, blandior, pellicio, non solum de canibus caudam blande moventibus, σαινει, κολακευει.* Hesychius. *Hinc, quatio, concutio, et metaphorice, commoveo, turbo.*” Schleusner. The word is commonly understood as a metaphor, taken from a dog’s moving his tail, either from joy or fear; but more frequently in the former sense. And Dr. Chandler supposes that “the apostle meant that Timothy was to caution the Thessalonians against being fawned and flattered out of their faith and hope, by views of security and other worldly advantages.” The common, and perhaps the more probable, interpretation is, that they should not be deterred from their profession by the persecution of the teachers of the gospel.

⁸ *Appointed to this.*] “This is the natural lot of us apostles.” Acts ix. 16. Newcome.—“In those early ages,” says Dr. Priestley, “men were not tempted by any honours or emoluments of this life. They were apprized that they were not to expect any advantage from the

So solicitous was I, my brethren, on your account, so apprehensive lest something amiss might have happened in consequence of our abrupt departure from Thessalonica, of the persecutions which we endured, and of the perils to which you were yourselves exposed, that I could no longer refrain from taking some steps to relieve my own anxiety, and to fortify your principles. And as it was not in my power to visit you, I very cheerfully proposed to remain at Athens by myself, in a situation of considerable difficulty, and amongst persons who were perfect strangers, many of whom were insolent and prating sceptics, and dispatched Timothy, my faithful and beloved associate in the ministry of the gospel, and indeed I may add, a fellow-worker with God himself in the same glorious cause, to Thessalonica, to confirm your faith, and to administer those advices and consolations which would be most effectual to encourage you to persevere in your Christian profession. And I particularly charged him to caution you against being warped from your integrity by the consideration of those sufferings to which the most eminent of the preachers of the Christian doctrine are exposed; for you cannot but recollect what you so often heard me declare, that ease and interest were not the objects we had in view in the exercise of our ministry; that suffering was as familiar to us as teaching, and was, in fact, a part of our ministerial and apostolic office. It was the divine appointment, and we knew from the beginning what we had to expect.

Ch. III.
Ver. 3.

4. The apostle, though he had distinctly forewarned them of what was to happen, yet being anxious for their steadfastness, had sent to inquire after their state, ver. 4, 5.

For, indeed, when we were with you, we told you beforehand, that we should suffer trouble, even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause,

4.
5.

scheme in this world, but that all their hopes of reward were to be in another. Now what could induce men in the cool possession of themselves, as the apostles evidently were, and thousands of others, naturally lovers of life and of the pleasures and advantages of it, as well as other men, to entertain these great and distant prospects, and to sacrifice every thing else to them, but the most well-grounded faith in the gospel, or such evidence as could not but command the assent of men in their circumstances, who had every possible opportunity of judging; and which therefore ought to satisfy us?" "This word," says Dr. Chandler, "is very justly translated. I see no reason to soften the meaning of it so as to exclude the positive order and appointment of God. The word is used both in sacred and profane writers to denote something fixed and determined. Luke ii. 34, Philip. i. 17. Nor is there any thing unworthy of God in such an appointment. He called them out to be public examples of faith, patience, and constancy. He appointed them to the honour of being martyrs and confessors for the truth, that hereby he might spread the Christian doctrine, approve their fidelity, and render them worthy the crown of victory."

Ch. III.
Ver. 5.

being no longer able to endure, I sent to know your fidelity¹, fearing, lest by some means the seducer² might have seduced you, and our labour might be in vain.

I did not flatter you, my brethren, when you first embraced the Christian religion, that either you or your teachers would lead an easy and quiet life in the open profession of this novel and obnoxious doctrine. While I was yet with you, before the storm burst, previously to any offence which was taken at us or at our doctrine, and while we were even held in admiration in consequence of the display of our miraculous powers, I told you that this tranquillity would be of short duration, and that sorrow and suffering would speedily overtake us; and so it proved, as you well recollect. These sufferings, therefore, which we so distinctly foretold, can constitute no reasonable objection against the authority of our mission. Knowing, however, the advantage which the artful enemies of the gospel would make of the persecutions of its ministers, I was eager to send my beloved colleague to inquire into your state, fearing lest the terrors of persecution should have alarmed you, or the artifices of the enemy have seduced you from your allegiance to the gospel, and should have made void our labours and our hopes.

5. The apostle expresses the utmost satisfaction in the report which Timothy had made of their adherence to Christianity, and of their affection to him, ver. 6—8.

6. *But Timothy, being lately returned³ from you to us, and having brought us good tidings of your fidelity and affection, and of the kind remembrance which you constantly have of us, being as earnestly desirous to see us, as*
 7. *we are to see you⁴; for this cause, brethren, we were comforted concerning*
 8. *you, in all our affliction and poverty⁵, by your fidelity. For now we live indeed⁶, seeing that ye stand firmly in the Lord.*

¹ *Your fidelity.*] “By profane authors,” says Dr. Chandler, “this word *πιστις* is frequently used to signify the ‘fidelity of subjects to a prince,’ and of ‘one man to another in the performance of promises;’ and should have been rendered *fidelity* or *constancy*.” See ver. 7, where Mr. Wakefield renders it *perseverance*. Compare ver. 8.

² *Seducer.*] *πειραζων* “one that solicits and persuades another to a criminal action, by whatsoever methods it may be. This is the sense of it also in profane authors.” Chandler.

³ *Timothy being lately returned.*] “Timothy having come back to us just now from you.” Wakefield. The expression seems to indicate that the epistle was written soon after Timothy’s return; who, together with Silas, came to the apostle at Corinth, from which city, therefore, this epistle was dated. See Acts xviii. 5.

⁴ *As earnestly desirous to see us, &c.*] “These words are part of Timothy’s report, who assured the apostle that their affectionate remembrance of him was such, that they had as warm and passionate a fondness for seeing him, as he could have for seeing them.” Chandler.

And now, my brethren, with unspeakable satisfaction I acknowledge that my solicitude is relieved, and that my fears concerning you have been happily dispelled by the return of Timothy, and the pleasing intelligence which he has brought. Having left Athens, and being now at Corinth, Silas and Timothy have lately joined me here. And though, as you perceive, I am destined to wander from place to place, and am but poorly provided with the necessities of life, having determined to accept of nothing from these opulent Corinthians; yet, amidst poverty and distress, I am soothed and cheered with the favourable report which my faithful associate has made of your firm adherence to your Christian profession, of your love to each other, and of your affectionate attachment to me, your instructor and friend. For Timothy has informed me that you long as earnestly to see me, as I do to see you. Whatever, therefore, may be the disadvantages of my external condition, I am far from meaning to complain. No, my brethren, since this evangelist is come back with the joyful tidings of your firm adherence to the doctrine of Christ, I feel myself a happy man: to be assured of your continual progress in faith and holiness, this is life indeed; life worth enjoying: it is health, wealth, and happiness.

Ch. II.
Ver. 8.

6. The apostle expresses his devout gratitude to God for the satisfaction which he felt on their account, and his earnest prayers that he may be permitted to visit them soon, ver. 9—11.

For what thanks are we able⁷ to render to God concerning you, in return for all the joy with which we rejoice on your account before our God? Night and day⁸ praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and

9.

10.

⁵ *Affliction and poverty.*] *ανάγκη* “this word signifies a necessity and pressure of any kind, but particularly the distress of poverty, which seems to be the meaning of the word in this place.” Chandler. The apostle was now at Corinth, where he refused to accept supplies from the new converts, and chose to maintain himself by his own manual industry. Acts xviii. 1—4; 2 Cor. xi. 9, 10, xii. 13—18. He was assisted by contributions from Macedonia, 2 Cor. xi. 9, and probably found it difficult to procure subsistence.

⁶ *We live indeed, &c.*] *εαν* does not always imply that the case is dubious. See 1 John iii. 2. “How does this generous and benevolent apostle,” says Dr. Benson, “treat his converts like his children, and with the bowels of a father overlook all his own persecutions and distresses as long as things went well with them! If they had not persevered, it would have greatly troubled and afflicted him. But it was joy, it was transport, it was life worth enjoying, to hear of their perseverance and stedfastness in the Christian faith. Here is a pattern for all the pastors of the Christian church.”

⁷ *For what thanks are we able to render in return.*] *ανταποδεναι*. “the word signifies, ‘to give something in return as an acknowledgement for favours received.’ The interrogation increases the vehemence and warmth of the sentiment. His gratitude was stronger than he was able to express.” See Chandler, whose translation I have followed.

⁸ *Night and day.*] “An allusion to the computation of the Jews, who began their day at sunset.” Benson.

CH. III. *make up what is wanting to insure your fidelity*¹. But may our God and
Ver. 11. *Father himself*², and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way³ unto you.

So delighted am I with the intelligence I have received concerning you, that I am at a loss for words to express my gratitude to the Father of mercies for the joy and transport which I feel on your account, when, in the hour of retired devotion, I bear you upon my heart before God. And indeed it is the constant theme of my earnest solicitation, morning and evening, to be permitted to visit you again, and to administer those instructions and encouragements, and those additional supplies of the holy spirit which may be requisite to your perfection in faith and holiness, and to your resolute perseverance in your Christian profession. And may that God who, in the gospel covenant, vouchsafes to acknowledge himself as common Father to Jew and Gentile; and may Jesus Christ, our gracious Master, who superintends my mission, and directs my course, be pleased to remove every impediment which obstructs our mutual wishes, and speedily to open a free passage for me to visit you again.

¹ *Wanting to insure your fidelity:*] “i. e. to impart some spiritual gift. Rom. i. 11. Grotius.” Newcome. “It is an imagination of some interpreters, (says Dr. Chandler, alluding to Dr. Benson and others,) that when the apostles first planted a church, they taught them only the plain and fundamental articles of Christianity, and the necessity of repentance and new obedience; and when the converts had digested these, then they instructed them in the more minute doctrines of Christianity. But I think this is a mistaken observation; nor do I well comprehend which of the real articles of Christianity are properly minute; I would hope no articles of the Christian doctrine deserve this character. The true meaning of the Greek expression is ‘those things which are yet wanting towards your fidelity;’ their constancy in the faith had not yet attained its full establishment and support; not that they had received but an imperfect knowledge of Christianity from the apostle, but that there was yet something wanting to confirm them in the faith they had embraced, which even Timothy could not supply. What these things were, Grotius hath with great judgement pointed out, Rom. i. 11, that he might impart some spiritual gift either upon greater numbers, or in larger abundance.”

Dr. C. supposes another alternative: that the apostle alludes to moral precepts, in which he had imperfectly instructed them. But surely this supposition is to the full as objectionable as Dr. Benson’s *minute doctrines*.

² *Our God and Father.*] “Here, as upon all occasions,” says Dr. Priestley, “the title of God is appropriated to the Father, and Christ is not entitled to that appellation, but is quite distinct from God, as much as any other man can be.”

³ *And our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way.*] Dr. Benson, Dr. Chandler, and other expositors understand this text as a prayer to Christ, and as authorizing what they call *mediatorial worship* of him. Dr. C. adds, that “*Lord* in the next verse unquestionably signifies *Christ*, and that the prayer is with great propriety addressed to him.” But Dr. Priestley, with much greater propriety, observes, that “though God and Christ are here joined together, it is by no means a proper example of prayer to Christ; but as all power is given to Christ, with respect to his church, and he frequently appeared to Paul, and directed the course of his apostolical journeys, it was natural for him to desire to have the same direction to go where he wished himself.” *To direct us, &c.* The word signifies *to make straight*: i. e. to remove impediments and obstructions. The apostle visited Macedonia twice after this, but not till six years after this epistle was written. See Benson.

7. The apostle further prays that the Thessalonians may improve in mutual affection and general benevolence, and that they may persevere in the practice of duty till the coming of Christ, ver. 12, 13. Ch. III.

And may the Lord⁴ cause you to increase and abound in love⁵ toward Ver. 12.

⁴ *May the Lord cause you to increase.*] ὁ Κύριος. This word is wanting in the Syriac: the Alexandrine copy reads ὁ Θεός, *God*; and the Clermont, with three other uncial manuscripts, reads ὁ κύριος Ἰησους, *the Lord Jesus*. With these conflicting authorities, it cannot be ascertained which is the true reading; nor whether the word *Lord* signifies Christ, or God his Father. I incline to the former sense, and think the prayer is addressed to Christ; who during the apostolic age maintained a personal intercourse with the church, which since that period has been withdrawn: which intercourse laid a foundation for personal applications to him, especially on the part of the apostle Paul, all whose motions were directed by him, which applications in other individuals, and in succeeding times, would be unauthorized and idolatrous. The apostle prays that the Lord would *cause them to increase and abound in love*; perhaps not by any immediate operation upon the heart, but by supplying them with means and opportunities of improvement in the doctrine and spirit of the gospel. Archbishop Newcome cautiously observes upon ver. 13, that "we have here a repetition of the antecedent, if we suppose Κύριος in ver. 12 to be genuine, and rightly understood of the Lord Jesus."

"In these two verses," says Dr. Benson, "the apostle first prays to God the Father, and then unto our Lord Jesus Christ." And he introduces a note discussing the question of prayer to Christ, in which he comes to this conclusion: "That supreme and ultimate worship is due to God, and to him alone: mediatorial worship is due to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to him alone." He adds, "If we follow the scripture model, we shall very seldom address our Lord Jesus Christ directly; and when we do, we should always remember to address him as mediator." Of which mode of address, however, the learned expositor has supplied us with no example from the New Testament. Dr. Chandler expresses himself with even more confidence upon the subject than Dr. Benson. Upon ver. 11 he observes, that "the prayer is directed with great propriety and dignity to God our Father, who is styled God peculiarly and emphatically, and who is the original, eternal, supreme, and indefectible source of all good; and to our Lord Jesus Christ, the mediatorial secondary source, the Father's eternal repository of good, in and by whom he enriches the whole rational creation, and especially his church on earth, with all necessary blessings." And he observes on the words ver. 12, *May the Lord cause you to increase*, "The Lord here unquestionably signifies Christ; and the prayer is with great propriety addressed to him because he had so loved them as to give himself as a propitiation for their sins." And he introduces a long paragraph at the end of his paraphrase upon this chapter, in which he vindicates at large the propriety and expedience of the mediatorial worship of Christ.

Thus it appears that these two learned and pious Arians regarded it as a duty to pray to Christ; and, together with Clarke, Emlyn, and other eminent Arian divines of the age in which they lived, they saw nothing in what they called *mediatorial* and *secondary worship*, inconsistent with the doctrine of the unity and sole supremacy of God the Father: whose creature Jesus is, and his delegate, as they believed, in the formation, support, and government of the universe. And in this conclusion they were completely justified, if their premises were true: for what impropriety can there be in addressing a friend who is known to be present and within hearing, whether he is seen or unseen? and who can be a proper object of worship, if the Lord our Maker is not? The practice of worshiping Christ prevailed very generally among the Arians of the last century; and had they lived in the present day, they would have thought it very hard to be denied the name of Unitarians, as the small remnant of their successors, who worship Jesus, now do. Nor can I see any reason for extending that epithet to all Arians of all descriptions, even to those who, like Dr. Clarke, actually exclude the agency of the Deity from his works, and who represent him as merely the silent spectator of the operations of the Logos, with the exception only of those who, very consistently surely with their own views of the case, address prayer to this omnipotent, omnipresent Logos, their Maker, Supporter, and Lord. This arbitrary limitation was never thought of till the time of Dr. Price, who first introduced it, and defined an Unitarian to be one who does not worship Christ: a definition which excludes Chandler, Benson, Emlyn, Peirce, and almost all the learned and pious Arian divines who

Ch. III.
Ver. 13.

each other, and toward all men, even as we do toward you¹: so as to establish your hearts unblameable in holiness in the presence of our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints².

were Dr. Price's predecessors, and at least his equals in theological learning. Yet, since the time of Dr. Price this modern definition has become a great favourite with many. Names do not alter the nature of things, and are of no use any further than they convey distinct ideas. Dr. Lardner, for the sake of perspicuity, limited his use of the word Unitarian to those who believe the proper humanity of Jesus Christ; or rather to those who do not ascribe to a created being either the *attributes*, the *works*, or the *worship* which is appropriate to the Great Supreme. In this definition he is followed by Mr. Lindsey, Dr. Priestley, and many others. And the consequence of using the word constantly in this sense is, that none of their readers can mistake their meaning. Others, however, choose to use the word in a laxer sense, including all Arians under the name of Unitarians excepting those who pray to Christ. And after defining their terms, they have no doubt a right, as all writers have, to use them in the sense so defined. But this change of signification has been attended with the inconvenience which might naturally be expected; it has introduced a lamentable degree of obscurity and confusion into many publications in other respects excellent. But let this pass. What is most extraordinary in the case is, that many who adopt Dr. Price's definition, and whose zeal is more conspicuous than their logic, value themselves highly upon it as if it were some great discovery in theology, and are by no means backward in challenging for themselves a superior degree of candour and liberality; while, with a warmth of indignation not justified by the occasion, they animadvert upon those of their brethren, who prefer Dr. Lardner's old and strict definition of Unitarianism to Dr. Price's new and lax one. Just as if there were a moral merit in a verbal difference; or, as if a writer were not at liberty, out of two definitions of the same term, to adhere to that which to his judgement appears the most correct.

The truth is, that Arianism, whether high or low, and by whatever name it is called, is in every shape erroneous and unscriptural. Carried to the extreme of Dr. Clarke, who maintains that the Logos is the Creator, Preserver, and Sustainer of the universal system, it sets up another God in the place of the Supreme, and excludes the Deity from his works; it deposes God from his throne. And so far as Arianism ascribes to a creature the attributes and works of God, it is erroneous and pernicious, it leads to polytheism and idolatry. It has no foundation in reason or in revelation, it tends to distract the mind, and to alienate the heart from God, who is the only Creator and Lord of all, and the only proper object of worship. With sentiments most friendly to the *persons* of those who are involved in this ancient error, it is the indispensable duty of every one who is enlightened in the truth as it is in Jesus, to enter his protest against their *doctrine*, and to detect and expose its fallacy and pernicious tendency to the utmost of his power. Truth can enter into no compromise with error. What fellowship hath light with darkness?

^b *Abound in love.*] "The first affection due from them was to one another as brethren and friends; but Christianity teaches, and the love of God and Christ inspires, a more diffusive charity, love to human nature, as such: yea, to our very enemies." Chandler.

¹ *Even as we.*] "How did the apostle love them? He loved them as a father his children: so as to be solicitous and intent upon promoting their salvation; so as to be content to be persecuted, and to live in perpetual straits to do them good; yea, so as to give up his life, if that were necessary, to secure their constancy and happiness. Generous apostle! How like the master he served! It is thus, Christians, you should love one another." Chandler.

² *Saints.*] *ἀγίων.* Some copies of little account read *αγγελων*, *angels*. See Grotius and Griesbach. Dr. Chandler says, "the word signifies both." It is of no practical consequence. Christ being represented under the character of a sovereign and a judge: in consistency with this symbol celestial beings are represented as his attendants and officers, to add to the dignity and pomp of his appearance. How far such descriptions are to be understood in a literal sense the awful event only will explain. And this will probably be widely different from our present imperfect and confused conceptions of it.

Dr. Benson concludes his notes upon this passage with the following reflections: "1. The apostles often put their converts in mind of Christ's coming to judgement, to excite them to

In the mean time, my dear Christian brethren, my earnest and affectionate prayers are daily offered up to God for your stability and improvement; that your conduct may be in every view worthy of your Christian profession. May God grant, and by the powerful operation of the genuine principles of the gospel may he bring it to pass, that your love to each other as fellow-Christians, exposed to the same difficulties, and heirs of the same immortal hopes, may increase and abound exceedingly. Also, that you may feel a warm benevolence to your fellow-creatures, to all who are partakers of the same nature, and capable of the same improvements in knowledge and virtue. And as our love and compassion to you was manifested in our exertions for your conversion, be you equally solicitous for the conversion of others.— This cordial, tender, universal benevolence, discovering itself in generous and habitual exertions to promote the happiness of all around you, is in fact the best means of fulfilling the duties which the gospel enjoins. In the practice of universal virtue may your hearts be firmly established, and amidst difficulties and temptations may you faithfully and honourably persevere, till that day, the arrival of which may be more speedy than we are aware, when our Lord and Master shall appear again, accompanied by all his faithful followers redeemed from the grave; whom he will present before his Father and our Father, his God and our God, as those who shall be entitled to the promises and the rewards of the gospel. In that chosen company, and upon that awful occasion, may it be your honour and happiness to appear as his approved disciples, and to participate in his glorious triumph.

Ch. III.
Ver. 13.

SECTION V.

THE APOSTLE earnestly exhorts the Thessalonians to the practice of universal virtue, and particularly to chastity, benevolence, prudence, and industry. Ch. iv. 1—12.

Ch. IV.

1. The apostle strictly enjoins by the authority of Christ, that in the whole of their conduct it should be their chief and growing concern to please God, ver. 1, 2.

the practice of universal righteousness, to prepare for that important and decisive day. 2. Our religious virtue must hold out to the end of life, if we would be prepared for the coming of Christ. 3. Our Christian course ends when we die, and terminates in the coming of Christ."

Ch. IV.
Ver. 1.

- Finally, therefore, brethren, we intreat and we exhort you*¹, *in the Lord Jesus*², *according as ye have received from us how ye ought to walk and to please God, and as indeed ye do walk*³, *that ye would excel*⁴ *still more. For ye know what charges we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus*⁵.

In the sequel of this epistle I shall take the liberty of giving you some plain hints of advice respecting your conduct as professors of the Christian religion; which from the report of Timothy appears to be particularly requisite. And first of all, I earnestly request as a favour conferred upon myself, and as a teacher of the Christian doctrine I seriously exhort you, that you will remember and reduce to practice the advice which I gave you while I was present with you. I taught you, that as disciples of Jesus it must now be your governing principle to please God, and in the whole of your temper and conduct to approve yourselves to his all-penetrating eye. And I taught you how this was to be done; namely, by the love and practice of universal virtue. It gives me great satisfaction to hear that this is indeed your general character; and that with regard to most of you the efficacy of the doctrine of the gospel is apparent in the holiness of your lives. My desire is, that you should not rest satisfied with present attainments, but that you should continually endeavour to excel, not only your heathen neighbours, but even yourselves and one another; and that in this generous emulation you should make rapid advances towards perfection of character. For this you know was the purport of those solemn and often-repeated charges which I delivered to you as the apostle of Jesus Christ, in the name and by the authority of my Master, and yours; who will acknowledge none as his disciples but those who obey his laws, and follow his perfect example.

2. The apostle strongly insists upon the necessity of chastity, and so-

¹ *We intreat and we exhort you.*] *We intreat.* “we request and desire it of you as a favour done to ourselves. *We exhort* implies superiority: it supposes both the capacity and the right of admonition.” Chandler.

² *In the Lord Jesus.*] “in his name, by your regard to him; and as you would approve yourselves to him as your judge.” Chandler. Newcome, who translates “*by the Lord Jesus*,” observes, “Some render ‘*in the Lord Jesus*’: that is, as professors of faith in him.” This appears to be the true sense of the phrase. *To be in Christ* is constantly used in the apostle’s writings to signify being a Christian. See Rom. xvi. 7, 9, 11.

³ *And as indeed ye do walk.*] This clause is found in the Alexandrine, Clermont, and many other manuscripts, and in the Æthiopic, Italic, and other versions. It is much in the apostle’s style; who is always desirous to commend where he can, and especially previous to the introduction of a reproof. See Griesbach.

⁴ *Excel.*] *περισσεύετε.* “It expresses, having abundance or plenty of any thing: hence it denotes to *exceed* or *excel*. See Eccles. iii. 19, Apocryp. Syr. xi. 12, xix. 24.” Chandler.

⁵ *By the authority of the Lord Jesus.*] *διὰ τῆς Κυρίας.* So Newcome and Wakefield.

lemnly warns the Thessalonians against those impurities which were the Ch. IV. disgrace of the heathen world, ver. 3—8.

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification⁶: that ye should abstain from fornication⁷, that every one of you may know how to preserve his body⁸ in sanctity and honour, not in lewd passions like the heathen⁹, who know not God; and that no one may transgress against¹⁰, nor injure¹¹ his brother¹² in this concern¹³; for the Lord will punish all such offences¹⁴, even as we formerly declared and testified to you. Ver. 3. 4. 5. 6.

And in the first place, my brethren, I cannot conceal my apprehensions that, having lately been converted from gross idolatry, you are not sufficiently apprized of the great stress which the gospel lays upon purity of character.

⁶ *Sanctification.*] ἀγιασμος, καθαρευσις, Hesychius: separation from the pollutions of the world, and consecration to the purposes of religion and virtue." Chandler.

⁷ *Fornication.*] πορνείας, every species of lewdness: so it is used by the best Greek writers." Chandler.

⁸ *To preserve his body.*] σκευις, his vessel. "Quippe etenim corpus, quod vas quasi constitit ejus." Lucr. iii. 441. See Newcome, Benson; and Chandler, who considers it as an allusion to vessels of the temple consecrated to God, and entitled to respect and reverence.

⁹ *Lewd passions, like the heathen.*] ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας. "The first word signifies the passions in general, the other signifies desire in general, particularly after riches, empire, pleasures, and especially after criminal lusts." See Chandler. Archbishop Newcome renders the words, "the passion of desire;" Mr. Wakefield, "lustful passions." Dr. Whitby, Dr. Benson, and Dr. Chandler, quote many passages from ancient writers, to show the extreme profligacy and shameless debauchery of the heathen world. Dr. Priestley remarks, "We may be surprised that the apostle should think it necessary to animadvert at all upon such vices as are recited in this address to Christians; but till men were apprized of the purity of the Christian precepts, they had no idea of much blame in very gross vices. But in a short time after, such things were not heard of among Christians. It is proper that these things should be observed, in order to give us a just idea of the value of Christianity, and how great a blessing it has been to mankind in a moral respect."

This excellent author, after noticing, upon ver. 3, some of the abominable practices which were used among the Egyptians, adds, "As the apostle observes, fleshly lusts war against the soul, and debase the mind. It is, however, the utter and manifest inconsistency of these vices with the Christian character, that gives many persons of the present age a dislike to it. For in these respects the maxims of modern unbelievers are as loose as those of the ancients."

¹⁰ *Transgress against.*] ὑπερβαίνειν a stronger word than ἀμαρτάνειν; and signifies to transgress in a bold and aggravated manner. See Chandler, from Eustathius.

¹¹ *Nor injure.*] πλεονεκτείν. See Wakefield's *Silva Critica*, P. i. p. 106. "to covet, or circumvent." See Benson. "by craft and violence to defraud a man of his property." Chandler. Πλεονεξία is unquestionably used by the apostle to express inordinate lusts. In that sense it is probably used here. The apostle, to express himself decently, expresses himself obscurely. See Locke on Eph. iv. 19.

¹² *His brother:*] i. e. his fellow-Christian; but it would be equally criminal to act in the same manner with respect to heathen. Dr. Benson, therefore, conjectures that the apostle alludes to some particular fact which had been communicated to him by Timothy.

¹³ *In this concern.*] ἐν τῷ πραγματι. See Wakefield, Newcome, &c. Raphelius and Chandler produce several quotations from ancient authors to show that the words have this sense. See 2 Cor. vii. 11.

¹⁴ *Will punish all such offences.*] "will punish all these things." Wakefield. "ἐκδικῶς" he who punishes another justly for his crimes." Chandler. "is an avenger of all such." Newcome.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 6.

You are required to live so as to please God, and I assure you that there is nothing which he more explicitly commands as an indispensable requisite to the attainment of his favour than an entire separation from the vices and abominable practices of your heathen state; and particularly from impurity in every degree and in every shape, in thought, word, and deed. To please God you must be well skilled in the art of governing yourselves, and restraining your passions within the limits of virtue and honour. You must utterly forsake those lascivious practices which are so common amongst your heathen neighbours, and so disgraceful to their character. They, indeed, have an apology which you have not. They have no just conceptions of the character and attributes of God, of his word and will; they worship deities of their own invention, whose example encourages, and whose rites require the most odious impurities. The true God whom you have learned to worship is of a very opposite character. He is purity itself. He strictly prohibits every violation of the law of chastity, and has solemnly declared that such offences shall be visited with condign punishment. And this doctrine we inculcated upon you when we were with you, though I fear that some of you have almost forgotten it; and we at the same time solemnly assured you that what we delivered to you upon this subject was dictated by the highest authority.

7, 8. *For God hath not called us to impurity, but to holiness: he, therefore, who scorneth¹, scorneth not man but God, who hath given his spirit, that holy spirit², unto us.*

I speak and write by the authority of God, who hath invited us to participate in the privileges of the gospel, not to indulge ourselves in the untroubled gratification of the inferior powers of our nature, but to separate and distinguish us from the rest of mankind by purity and self-government. I fear that some of you, who are but imperfectly converted from the immorali-

¹ *He who scorneth.*] “ὁ ἀθετῶν, ἀθετεῖ, ἀτιμάζει.” Hesychius. “Proprie, loco suo moveo, contemno et contumeliose tracto.” Schleusner. “to reject any thing with contempt as false and groundless; or to throw it away with dishonour and scorn.” Chandler. Gal. ii. 21; Jude ver. 8; comp. 2 Pet. ii. 10; Luke x. 16; John xii. 48. Dr. Benson observes, that “as the apostles honestly informed their converts that they must expect persecution, so they told them the truth notwithstanding their prejudices, and did not draw in converts by the baits of sensual pleasure.” He further adds, “that perhaps some of the younger or the more gay and thoughtless converts might be apt to smile at the apostle’s strictness, considering how their heathen neighbours judged and acted, and the principles in which they had been educated. The apostle, therefore, here puts on an air of uncommon seriousness and gravity, and lets them know that the ridicule and contempt reached higher than they imagined.” Dr. Chandler gives an excellent summary of the apostle’s advice.

² *His spirit, that holy spirit.*] τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ τὸ ἅγιον. See Macknight.

ties of your heathen state, may dislike the restrictions of the gospel, and may even be disposed to sneer and scornfully to reject my advice as unreasonable and impracticable, and contrary both to the doctrine and example of the most celebrated sages of the heathen world. But, let the presumptuous scorner know, that his contempt falls not upon weak and fallible men, but upon that God whose ministers and messengers we are; who, whatever they may think, has inspired us by his own spirit, the spirit of holiness and purity, to denounce in his name the most awful judgements against those who violate the laws of chastity; and who will, another day, assuredly vindicate the honour of his word.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 8.

3. The apostle commends the affectionate and benevolent spirit of the Thessalonian believers, and exhorts them to cherish and extend it, ver. 9, 10.

Now, concerning brotherly kindness, we have no occasion to write³ to you, for ye are yourselves divinely instructed to love one another⁴; and indeed ye do this toward all the brethren throughout Macedonia: but we exhort you, brethren, to excel therein still more.

9.

10.

I lament that the corrupt habits of your former life, and the imperfection of your views of that sublimity of character to which the gospel is intended to elevate us, has made it necessary for me to insist so much at large upon the virtue of chastity. It is with pleasure that I now advert to another duty in which you are known to excel, the duty of sympathy and kindness to your brethren in the faith, who are also, generally speaking, your brethren in affliction. To your honour be it spoken, you readily learned that divine lesson which is one of the first that is taught in the school of Christ, to love and to be kind to one another. And this lesson I rejoice to hear that you have practised, not only in your own city, but throughout your whole province: so that there is not a Christian brother in all Macedonia who needed your assistance to whom that assistance was denied. Go on, my brethren, in this honourable course. Aspire after yet greater excellence in this godlike virtue. The spirit of kindness and good-will is the genuine spirit of the gospel of Jesus.

³ *We have no occasion to write.*] Dr. Benson observes, that this form of speaking plainly supposes that there was great need to write to them, to recommend purity and chastity. Some of the most approved manuscripts and versions read *εχουμεν*. See Griesbach.

⁴ *Divinely instructed, &c.*] *i. e.* "by the precepts of God in the gospel." Newcome. Benson remarks, "that the expression implies that they had not only been taught, but that they had also followed divine instruction." See Isai. liv. 13.

Ch. IV. 4. The apostle exhorts them to prudence, peace, and industry, and to a conduct which might be creditable to their profession, ver. 11, 12.

Ver. 11. *And that ye be ambitious¹ to be quiet², and to mind your own concerns³,
12. and to work with your own hands⁴, as we formerly charged you, that you may walk creditably⁵ towards those who are without⁶, and may want nothing⁷.*

I have reason to fear that some of you abuse the privileges of your profession to idleness and impertinence; and that in expectation of being maintained out of the common stock, and under pretence of zeal for the gospel, you neglect your proper business, and officiously obtrude yourselves into the houses and company of persons with whom you have no concern, and thus, in a busy commercial city like Thessalonica, you expose the Christian religion to the scoffs of unbelievers, as though it encouraged an idle, intrusive, meddlesome disposition. Let such persons remember the advice we

¹ *That ye be ambitious.*] So Wakefield. "that ye earnestly strive." Newcome. "φιλοτιμεισθαι" 'to be actuated by the love of praise and honour;' hence it denotes great diligence and vigour in any affairs whatsoever. This is the true import of the word in the place before us; and it should have been rendered, 'that ye diligently or earnestly study.'" Chandler.

² *To be quiet.*] ἡσυχάζειν. "to live an orderly, quiet, and peaceable life; not to intermeddle with affairs which did not belong to them. Timothy had probably informed him that the Thessalonians were too much given to this busy, impertinent spirit, 2 Thess. iii. 6, which was too much the temper of the Grecians in general." Chandler. Perhaps some of the Christians at Thessalonica boasted that they were ambitious to manifest a public spirit, and were willing to neglect their own private affairs in order to become benefactors to the public; whereas the apostle's advice is, that they should be ambitious to be quiet, and to let other men's business alone.

³ *And to mind your own concerns.*] πρᾶσσειν ταῖς ἰδίαις. "to confine themselves to their own particular affairs, without officiously meddling with the concerns of others." Chandler.

⁴ *To work, &c.*] "The original word denotes labouring and working of any kind, and is particularly used of agriculture, and the employments which fall to the lot of the poorer sort of mankind." Chandler. It should seem that the converts at Thessalonica consisted chiefly of persons who maintained themselves by their industry.

⁵ *Creditably.*] εὐσχημονως. "Hesychius says, the word signifies those who move gracefully in dancing. Hence it signifies decently in general." Chandler. "becomingly." Newcome.

⁶ *Without.*] i. e. the heathen who are without the pale of the church, Mark iv. 11; 1 Cor. iv. 12; Col. iv. 5.

⁷ *And may want nothing.*] μηδενος χρεϊαν εχητε, or may have need of no man. Dr. Chandler observes, that "these admonitions were necessary in the beginning of Christianity, to prevent the reproach, that it took persons off from their labours and employments, and encouraged idleness in those who professed it." "Perhaps," says Dr. Benson, "under pretence of spreading Christianity, and of a zeal for the spiritual good of others, they neglected their own affairs, and brought on poverty. This led them to frequent the houses of those who were richer, by base flatteries to court their favour, pragmatically and officiously to concern themselves in their affairs, and to live upon their substance. Upon the rise of new sects such idle busy-bodies are more common. But they are out of the way of their duty, and bring up an ill report of religion; even though they should be daily and hourly talking upon religious subjects, or at every body's table, and in all companies, proclaiming their zeal against errors and heresies, and for promoting truth and purity. They are a common nuisance, and ought to be discouraged if the churches would have peace."

gave them when we were ourselves at Thessalonica. Let it be their ambition not to obtrude themselves where they are not wanted, and to proffer advice where it is not asked, but to live quietly at home; to attend to their own business, to maintain themselves and their families by their own industry: and thus to procure themselves an honourable independence, and to recommend Christianity to their neighbours, as a religion which not only insures future felicity, but which, by enjoining prudence and diligence, contributes likewise to the temporal advantage of its consistent professors.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 12.

SECTION VI.

THE APOSTLE forbids all extravagant lamentations over deceased Christians; and comforts the Thessalonians, by representing to them the Christian doctrine concerning the resurrection of the dead. Ch. iv. 13—18.

1. The apostle forbids extravagant lamentations over the Christian dead, because of the assured expectation that God by Christ would raise them from the grave, ver. 13, 14.

Now, we⁸ would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are fallen asleep⁹, that ye grieve not¹⁰ even as others who have no hope¹¹.

13.

⁸ *We would not, &c.*] *ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐθέλομεν.* This is the reading of the best manuscripts, and is adopted into the text by Griesbach and Newcome.

⁹ *Fallen asleep.*] Dr. Chandler observes, that “under this image of *sleep* death is frequently represented in the ancient writings both of Greece and Rome; and he produces some beautiful passages to this purpose. He adds, that “it is with unspeakably greater propriety that revelation speaks of death under the similitude of sleep; not only on account of its being release from all the labours and afflictions of life, but because it is to be succeeded by a resurrection to new life and vigour.”

¹⁰ *That ye grieve not.*] Dr. Benson justly remarks, that “Christianity aims not at rooting out the affections, but to moderate and duly regulate them. The apostle does not forbid them to sorrow at all, but to sorrow like those without hope.

¹¹ *Others who have no hope:*] i. e. the heathen world. The wisest philosophers spoke very doubtfully upon the subject. And the generality of the heathen world had no hope whatever concerning the dead: for if they believed them to exist at all, it was, even though in Elysium, in a state far inferior to what they enjoyed on earth. See Dr. Chandler, and the references in his notes. Lucian, in his treatise on *mourning*, gives an account of the popular belief concerning the dead; who were supposed to be confined in a deep place under the earth, void of all light. He also describes the extravagance of their mourning and lamentation upon the death of any of their valuable friends: “All were dissolved in tears, and nothing was to be seen but beating of breasts, pulling their hair, tearing their cheeks, rending their garments, throwing

Ch. IV.
Ver. 14.

For as¹ we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so we believe that God through Jesus² will bring with him those who are fallen asleep.

It gives me pain to learn that some valuable members of your society have been removed by death; and the more so as I hear that you have allowed yourselves in some extravagant expressions of grief upon the occasion which were quite unworthy your profession and expectations as believers in the gospel: especially as your sorrow was in a considerable degree enhanced by some erroneous opinion which you had taken up concerning the solemn appearance of Christ to judgement. Such passionate expressions of despair only become those who are utter strangers to the hope of the gospel. Allow me, then, to repeat, what you have so often heard before, the doctrine which the gospel teaches concerning the state of departed believers: who are not so properly speaking *dead*, as fallen into a deep, sound sleep, from which they are soon to be awakened, refreshed and vigorous, to a new and heavenly life. And with these views you will easily see how unreasonable it is for you to indulge in the same extravagance of grief which is pardonable in your heathen neighbours, who have no hope of a future life. Recollect then, my brethren, that the fundamental article of the Christian faith is, that Jesus died and rose again; that he did not suffer in appearance only, but in reality; and that he really, and in very deed, rose to a new and immortal life. If we do not know and firmly believe this fact, we are not the disciples of Jesus. But if we do believe, there is another equally important fact, which is inseparably connected with it; namely, that God by Christ will raise all those who now are, or who at his final appearance will be, asleep in their graves. And that he will return again for this glorious purpose is as certain, and as firmly believed by us, as that he himself is risen and is now alive. We cannot believe one without the other; for the event which has already taken place is the proof and pledge of that which is to succeed. When Jesus appears, God will by him raise the Christian dead, and introduce them into a

dust upon their heads, rolling upon the earth, and beating their heads against the ground; uttering the bitterest complaints, and breaking out into the most passionate lamentations."

¹ *For as we, &c.*] "*εἰ* signifies 'seeing that,' Rom. v. 10, 15; 1 Cor. xv. 11; Gal. iv. 7." Benson. Dr. Chandler observes, that the sentence is evidently defective; and ought to be thus translated: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so we also believe," &c.

² *Through Jesus.*] So Wakefield and Newcome. Chandler also prefers it, though it is allowed that *διὰ* with a genitive sometimes signifies *in*. Rom. ii. 27, iv. 11; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Tim. ii. 15. Observe, the apostle consoles his friends with the hope of a resurrection: he says nothing of their present happiness in an intermediate state.

state of glory and happiness with him, their revered and beloved master and Lord. Ch. IV.

2. The apostle consoles them with the assurance that believers who are living when Christ returns will have no advantage over those who will then be dead; but that these likewise will be raised in time to bear their part in the awful solemnities of the scene, ver. 15—18.

Moreover, this we declare to you by the command of the Lord³, that we who are left alive⁴ at the coming of the Lord shall not anticipate⁵ those who are fallen asleep. Ver. 15.

I am informed that some of you apprehend that your dead friends will sustain some peculiar disadvantage, and in particular, that they will be deprived of that glorious and interesting spectacle which will be exhibited to the astonished world at the final awful appearance of Jesus Christ; when he returns to raise the dead and to judge the world, of which those of us who shall be then living will be the admiring witnesses: and I hear that this is the excuse which you offer for the extravagant tokens of your grief. But for this suspicion I assure you that there is no foundation. I am authorized by Jesus our revered Master himself, to declare that those of us, whosoever they may be, who may happen to live to the awful period of his second coming, shall in this respect have no advantage over our sleeping brethren; and that we shall not be introduced to this magnificent scene a moment sooner than those who will be at rest in the tomb.

³ *By command.*] εν λογῳ. See Macknight; and Chandler, who observes, that the subject was of such a nature as could not be known without express revelation.

⁴ *We who are left alive, &c.*] Grotius observes here, that Paul thought it possible that he might live to the time of the general judgement. To this opinion Dr. Chandler accedes, upon the principle “that the time of the general judgement is absolutely uncertain, and that it will come suddenly and unexpected.” Our Lord expressly says, that the times and seasons the Father has reserved in his own power, Acts i. 7; and Mark xiii. 32 he declares, that the day and the hour when the Son of Man should come was concealed even from himself. It is of importance to remember, that the prediction of an event does not necessarily imply either the knowledge of the event, or of the season when it was to happen; and it seems not improbable that the apostles and primitive converts expected that the day of judgement would take place before the end of the generation then living. Most interpreters, however, understand the apostle in this passage as speaking of all Christians in all ages as constituting one body or people. See Deut. xxvi. 6—9; Ps. lxvi. 6; Matt. xxiii. 35. Benson, Newcome.

⁵ *Shall not anticipate.*] ε μη φθασωμεν “shall not be before, or go before.” Newcome.—Mons. Saurin’s conjecture, in his note upon this text, may possibly be just. The Thessalonian Christians were earnestly desirous of seeing the splendid spectacle of Christ’s appearance to judgement, and bitterly lamented that their departed friends would be deprived of this grand exhibition: to alleviate these apprehensions, the apostle communicates to them the information in this paragraph. See Doddridge’s note *in loc.*

Ch. IV.
Ver. 16.

For the Lord himself¹ will descend from heaven with acclamation, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ will rise first.

A most magnificent and awful spectacle it will indeed be; such as no human tongue can tell, no human heart conceive. Jesus, who was once dead, but is now alive and ascended into the highest heavens, will then descend from his throne of glory in all the pomp of a conqueror in a triumphal procession. His followers and friends will joyfully greet him, and with loud acclamations will hail his approach: celestial heralds will proclaim his commission; and a trumpet, far louder and more energetic than that which once sounded upon Mount Sinai, will rouse the astonished universe, will even penetrate the tomb, and summon the whole race of mankind to appear at the dread tribunal. Under such imagery, though infinitely short of the sublime reality, may some faint conception of the grandeur and solemnity of the scene be conveyed to the mind. One fact, however, is literally true; that is, that all who have died in the faith of Jesus shall be raised to life before any change takes place in those who will then be the living inhabitants of the earth.

17. *Afterward, we who are left alive will be caught up² together with them into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall ever be with the Lord³.*

¹ *For the Lord himself, &c.]* This pompous representation of the descent of Christ to raise the dead and to judge the world, is intended to excite in the mind of the reader an awful sense of the solemnity and importance of that great event. How far it is to be accomplished in any thing like a literal sense the event itself can alone explain. The representation seems to be that of a conqueror advancing in a triumphal procession, attended with the acclamations of the spectators: a herald proclaiming his commission, and trumpets announcing his approach. Some suppose that the shout is the voice of Christ himself; but the word more properly expresses the acclamation of numbers. The word *archangel*, or principal messenger, seems to mean nothing more than the officer appointed for the purpose; as we say "the principal herald at arms." And the *trump of God* is a loud-sounding trumpet, alluding probably to the trumpet on Mount Sinai. Mr. Evanson thinks that the apostle here refers to the sound of the archangel's trumpet in the Apocalypse, Rev. xvi. 17; and infers from it that this epistle was written after the Apocalypse, and that the apostle bears testimony to it as divinely inspired; but the argument, though ingenious, does not appear to be so conclusive as the learned writer seems to apprehend. See Evanson.—*With acclamation.* Worsley.

² *Caught up:]* literally, "snatched up;" it expresses not a voluntary act of their own, but an effect suddenly, forcibly, and supernaturally produced. See Chandler. What will really happen, in this as in the former case, the event alone can disclose.

³ *And so we shall ever, &c.]* Dr. Priestley observes, that "the phrase 'being with the Lord' evidently refers to the state after the resurrection. It is after the meeting of the Lord in the air, and not before, that any persons are said to be with him. On the hypothesis of the dead being supremely happy, and continuing to be so till the resurrection, it would have been so far from being necessary to have informed them, that those who should be alive at the com-

Immediately after this astonishing event, and not, as you apprehend, before it, we whose lives may be prolonged to this awful period, shall undergo a great and instantaneous change ; for we shall be exempt from the stroke of death, and shall be suddenly transformed into the resemblance of our glorified Master. And then, in company with those who have been raised to life, we shall be at once, by a divine energy, transported into the clouds to meet our descending Lord in the regions of the atmosphere ; and after having been acquitted at his bar, and acknowledged by him as his friends, we shall be admitted to his society, and shall spend a happy eternity with him and with each other, in the best company and in the most delightful and useful employments.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 17.

Wherefore comfort⁴ ye one another with these declarations:

18.

These important facts, which I have thus stated, you may firmly depend upon as a revelation from God, which it will be your wisdom to improve both for exhortation and comfort. Exhort one another, my Christian brethren, to be diligent and unwearied in your preparation for this awful scene, that when your Lord cometh, whether it be sooner or later, you may be in a proper posture to receive him, and may not be ashamed in his presence. Also, console one another with these glorious truths. When you lose your pious friends by death, remind each other that they are only fallen into a sound and undisturbed repose, from which they will soon awake, refreshed and vigorous, to a happy and immortal life. And, in the prospect of your own speedy dissolution, let not your spirits be unreasonably depressed. Jesus, your pattern and your chief, died and rose again ; and because he lives, we shall live also.

ing of Christ would have no advantage over those who had been dead ; that these would have had a great and manifest advantage over their brethren, having enjoyed the greatest happiness in the presence of God and of Christ many ages before them. All that the apostle was able to say was, that they who are now dead shall not be upon the whole in a worse condition than those who shall be alive, because they would be raised to immortal life before any change should take place in the living." It is evident that the apostle is here speaking only of the resurrection of the just : the dead in Christ, true believers. His subject did not lead him to treat of the resurrection of the wicked. It is a very unjust insinuation of Orbio the Jew, in his controversy with Limborch, and afterwards of Mr. Gibbon, that the apostle made proselytes to Christianity by persuading men that believers should be translated to a state of happiness without dying. See Doddridge and Macknight ; also Limborch's *Coll.* p. 75.

⁴ *Comfort ye, &c.*] The word signifies both to *comfort* and to *exhort* ; and, as Dr. Chandler observes, " the apostle might intend to be understood in both senses." Dr. Priestley remarks, " This is abundant consolation. It may, indeed, appear more desirable to enter upon a state of happiness immediately after death ; and this may be a reason why Christians are so ready to adopt this opinion. But we ought to be satisfied with the happiness which God has promised us, and which will be revealed in due time : viz. at the resurrection of the just."

APPENDIX TO SECT. VI.

Ch. IV. THE interpretation which is given to this passage by the late learned and ingenious Newcome Cappe, in his *Essays on Sacred Scripture*, vol. ii. is so extraordinary, and so remote from the common interpretation, that it would not be doing justice to the reader not to state it.

He supposes that the Thessalonian Christians expected that Christ would soon return to establish a temporal kingdom in the world, from the privileges and blessings of which those would of course be excluded who were not converted to the Christian faith. That on this account many were in distress because of their unconverted friends, who, in the language of the apostle, are said to be asleep. And that the design of the apostle is to console them with the hope that many of their friends who were now heathens and idolaters would be converted, not in time to become subjects of the temporal reign which was never to take place, but in time to enter nearly at the same time with them, that is, at death, upon their future everlasting reward in the presence of Christ.

“ Ver. 13. Your concern for those friends who are not yet awakened to receive Jesus and his gospel, is indeed to be commiserated, yet it is not altogether a hopeless case.

“ 14. The coming of Christ is not a personal but a figurative advent. Personally, Jesus is in heaven. The awakening of these sleepers is not beyond the power of him who brought Jesus from the dead. The power to which Jesus is exalted encourages some hope that by means of Jesus, that is, through the holy spirit, many who have hitherto been insensible to his call, God will collect and unite to him, to partake in the glories of the heavenly state.

“ 15. For this I must tell you *εν λογω*, *in the language of the Lord*, that we who are already Christians shall not be beforehand with them who are yet unawakened, if, in the end, they be recovered, and brought to the acknowledgement and obedience of the truth.

“ 16. Christ will indeed come from heaven while many are yet living; as heretofore by the holy spirit, so by and by in many signal and alarming events. But this coming does not promise to those who *are* Christians any advantage over those who hereafter may be such. The resurrection of the friends whom we are now lamenting may happen first.

“ 17. And it will not be till after that, together with them, and not before Ch. IV. them, or without them, we and they indiscriminately, as we are summoned out of this world, shall be conveyed in clouds to dwell with Christ in heaven. *Thus*, not otherwise; *then*, not sooner; *there*, not elsewhere, shall we be with the Lord, and with each other, for ever.

“ 18. Wherefore, comfort one another concerning the spiritually dead, whom ye lament and love, with considerations such as these.”

I am almost tempted to say that, if such an interpretation is admissible, it is impossible for words to convey distinct ideas. But I correct myself: for it often happens that interpretations which appear most natural to one, appear the reverse to another. And, as Dr. Price says, we are apt to wonder at one another. I have no doubt that the pious and ingenious author was fully satisfied of the justness of his interpretation; and it helped him over a great difficulty in his hypothesis, that the resurrection takes place immediately after death. But it may be permitted to ask, if this be the true sense of the text, how came it to escape every preceding interpreter, ancient and modern?

SECTION VII.

THE APOSTLE exhorts the Thessalonians to prepare for the appearance of Christ, arguing particularly from the uncertainty of the precise time when this great event shall take place. Ch. v. 1—11.

1. He reminds them that Christ will appear at a season when he is least expected by the unbelieving world, ver. 1—3.

But concerning the exact time¹, brethren, there is no occasion² that I Ch. V.
Ver. 1.
should write to you.

With respect to that awful event which is the subject of our discourse, the final appearance of Jesus Christ to raise the dead and to judge the world, I have already stated all that is necessary to confirm your faith, to govern your practice, and to administer to your consolation; and particularly to

¹ *The exact time.*] So Wakefield. Literally, “the times and seasons;” χρόνοι, *times*, denotes large periods; καιροί, *seasons*, particular times when particular events were to take place. See Chandler. Acts i. 7; Eccles. iii. 1; Dan. ii. 27.

² *There is no occasion.*] Some good copies read χρεια ἔστι. See Griesbach. “it need not be written to you.” Wakefield.

Ch. V.
Ver. 1.

remove the apprehensions you entertained with respect to the superior advantages of the living believers above the dead at that interesting crisis. As to the exact period when this important event will take place, I have nothing to add to what I mentioned to you while I resided among you, and which you no doubt recollect.

2. *For ye yourselves know perfectly¹ that the day of the Lord² is coming³, even as a thief by night⁴.*

You cannot have forgotten what I taught you by the authority of Christ himself: that the awful crisis is rapidly advancing, and that it will eventually come upon us when least expected; just as a thief breaks into a house at midnight, when all the family are asleep and secure, not entertaining the least apprehension of so disastrous an event. In fact, the hour of our Lord's appearance is absolutely unknown to all of us; nor will he give notice of the precise time of the event, any more than a thief gives notice of the hour when he intends to rob the house.

3. *While men are saying peace⁵ and security, then sudden destruction is coming upon them, as pangs upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.*

The event of Christ's coming to judgement will be as sudden and as calamitous to the generation then living, as the deluge to the generation which were overwhelmed by it. Men will be thinking of nothing less than the catastrophe that is approaching; they will be immersed in vanity and pleasure, and will ridicule the expectation of Christians as a weak and unmanly superstition. But in an hour when they least expect it, the awful catastrophe

¹ *Know perfectly.*] "from the tenor of my instructions." Newcome. See also Benson and Chandler.

² *The day of the Lord.*] Hammond interprets this phrase, "of the destruction of Jerusalem." Dr. Benson believes him to be singular in this interpretation, and confuted by Le Clerc and Whitby; the latter expositor thinks that the apostle is treating of both events.

³ *Is coming.*] So Wakefield. Macknight remarks, that "the verbs are in the present tense in this paragraph, to denote the certainty and instantaneousness of the event." This might lead to the mistake which gave occasion to the second epistle.

⁴ *A thief by night.*] By this comparison our Lord himself illustrates the unexpectedness of his coming, Matt. xxiv. 43; see also 2 Pet. iii. 10, Rev. iii. 3. "to denote," says Dr. Chandler, "the uncertainty of the time, the unexpectedness of the event, and the state of security and fearlessness in which mankind should be involved." "The apostle's expressions of uncertainty as to the precise time of this event are so far (says this learned writer) from being any reflection upon his authority, that it is rather a proof of his integrity and prudence, in that he plainly acknowledges that he had no revelation in this article."

⁵ *While saying peace, &c.*] This circumstance is taken notice of by our Lord himself, "from whom (says Dr. Chandler) I doubt not but the apostle had it." Matt. xxiv. 39, 40; see also 2 Pet. iii. 4.

will burst upon them, like the pangs of child-birth, and will overwhelm them in universal and inevitable ruin. Ch. v.

2. Christians being forewarned of this event, ought to hold themselves in a state of habitual preparation for it, ver. 4—6.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness⁶, that the day should overtake you as a thief. Ver. 4.

The heathen world do not know, and will not believe, that such a catastrophe will ever take place: whenever it shall come, therefore, it must be to them a day of surprise and terror. But you, my brethren, are better informed: you are assured that this event is actually approaching, though you know not the exact hour of its arrival: it ought not, therefore, to be an object of surprise or dread to you; you ought to be, and I trust you are, in a state of habitual preparation for it.

Ye all are sons of light⁷, and sons of day; we are not sons of night and of darkness: therefore let us not sleep⁸ as others do, but let us keep watch⁹ and be sober. 5. 6.

The idolatrous and unbelieving world are involved in midnight darkness; they see nothing before them, and they sleep or riot in the midst of danger and on the verge of destruction. But you, my brethren, who are believers in the doctrine of Christ, are brought out of darkness into broad day-light: you see your true state, you know what important events are at hand. You have learned how you may best prepare for them; so that what will to others be a season of terror and dismay, will to you, if you improve your knowledge, be a time of joy and triumph. From us believers the thick veil of ignorance and of prejudice has been removed: we are no longer under the dark and

⁶ *In darkness.*] “Darkness,” says Dr. Benson, “does not here mean wickedness, but gross ignorance in matters of religion. John iii. 20, Eph. v. 8.” “καταλαβῆ, should surprise you.” Wakefield.

⁷ *Sons of light, &c.*] “A usual hebraism, which implies that one thing is in some respect the cause of another. Light is properly the parent and original of every Christian as such: they are formed as Christians in their principles, tempers, and lives, by the heavenly light of gospel truth.” Chandler. “*υἱός, hebraismus: sæpe dicitur de eo qui studiosus, vel particeps est alicujus rei.*” Rosenmuller.

⁸ *Let us not sleep.*] “Sleep is here taken in the figurative sense, to denote the thoughtless, indolent, careless, secure and fearless temper of mind, which is the condition of persons oppressed with natural sleep.” Chandler.

⁹ *Let us keep watch.*] “that we may guard against surprise, and prevent danger.” Chandler; who adds, that “Christians are to consider themselves as engaged in a hazardous warfare against subtle and powerful enemies; in which the want of vigilance and sobriety would be as truly criminal, and as certainly destructive, as in a soldier to be dissolved in sleep, or enfeebled by drunkenness.”

Ch. V.
Ver. 6.

dangerous delusion of idolatry and superstition. Our conduct, therefore, ought to correspond with our advantages. We have not the same excuse that others have for negligence and vice. Enlightened as we are by the cheering beams of the gospel, let us avoid the indolence, the false security, the criminal excesses, of our idolatrous neighbours: let us rouse ourselves to the active discharge of duty, and, like soldiers upon guard, let us by vigilance, fidelity, and temperance, approve ourselves to our exalted Chief.

3. It is the indispensable duty of those who profess themselves the faithful disciples of Christ, to gird on the armour of the gospel, and vigorously to perform the duties of their post, in expectation of the promised reward, ver. 7—10.

7. *For those who sleep, sleep by night; and those who are drunken, are drunken by night*¹.

The darkness of heathenism affords some plausible excuse for indolence and indifference; and countenances, or shelters, the most licentious practices: as the shades of the night are by some allotted to repose, and by others they are made the screen for intemperance and excess, of which they would be ashamed in open day.

8. *But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation*².

Let us then, my brethren, who have emerged from the dark gloom of heathenism and prejudice, and who enjoy the glorious light of the gospel-day, renounce the disgraceful deeds of darkness, and carefully avoid all intemperance and excess. As faithful and vigilant sentinels upon guard, let us gird on the armour of the gospel. And, in particular, let us defend the

¹ *Drunken by night.*] “Raphelius produces passages from Polybius, to prove that it was regarded as disgraceful by the heathen to be seen intoxicated in the day-time.” Dr. Chandler; who adds, “I wish this was universally true in our times.”

² *Putting on the breastplate, &c.*] The apostle here pursues the allegory of a soldier upon duty; and gives the Christian suitable armour for the parts most exposed, and where the wounds would be most dangerous. I have adopted Dr. Chandler’s explanation of the fitness of the armour for the part to which it is applied: “*faith and love* for the breast, the seat of the affections; and *hope of salvation* for the head, the seat of reason.” I am not, however, without some doubts whether this be not carrying the allegory further than the apostle intended; who perhaps meant nothing more than that faith, and love, and hope, were the best defence of a Christian against the superstitions and the vices of the heathen world. “*Ostendit quomodo præparare se debeant Christiani ad diem illum, nempe fide, amore, spe. Instructus his virtutibus, paratus est quandocunque ille dies venerit. ΠΙΣΤΙΣ, firmissima persuasio Jesum esse Messiam, auctorem nostræ salutis. ἀγάπη, benevolentia erga omnes homines. ἐλπίς, spes æternæ salutis.*” Rosenmüller.

heart, and guard against all unreasonable and criminal affections by a steady and practical faith in the discoveries of the gospel; and by ardent active love to God and man. And let the glorious hope of immortality, founded on the promises of the gospel, be a helmet to defend us from the poisoned arrows of popular superstition, and to preserve the intellect ever calm and clear for the investigation of moral and Christian truth.

Ch. V.
Ver. 8.

For God hath not appointed³ us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us⁴, that whether we be awake or asleep⁵ when he appears, we may live together with him.

9.

10.

It is with good reason that I remind you of the hope of salvation; for though the appearance of Christ will be for the destruction of the unbelieving world, it will issue in the final triumph of his faithful disciples. For let me assure you, God does not intend our punishment, but our deliverance from sin and death, at that awful season, when his son shall return to raise the dead and to judge the world. He once appeared in a humble form, and suffered death to ratify that covenant which imparts to us the blessings of life; and which insures final and everlasting felicity in the presence of God and Christ to every sincere believer, whether it be his lot to be found alive or dead at the season of the great consummation of all things.

4. The apostle closes the subject with a suitable exhortation, ver. 11.

Therefore encourage⁶ one another and edify⁷ each other, as indeed ye do⁸.

11.

Upon the whole, therefore, considering the certainty and importance of the second advent of Christ, the uncertainty of the time when it shall take

³ *God hath not appointed, &c.*] See John iii. 15; to which there is perhaps an allusion here.

⁴ *Who died for us.*] "Christ died for us men, and for our salvation; inasmuch as by his blood he sealed and established that new covenant, wherein pardon of sin, and a resurrection to eternal life, are promised to all sincere penitents, and prevailing holy persons." Benson.

⁵ *Asleep.*] We have here a remarkable instance of the apostle's custom of changing the ideas which he annexes to his words, without previous notice to the reader. In this passage the word *sleep* is used in no less than three different senses: ver. 7, it signifies natural rest; ver. 6, it expresses remissness and negligence in the practice of duty; and here, ver. 10, it is unquestionably used to express the sleep of death. See Benson. "Sensus est, ut sive superstites, sive mortui deprehendamus die illo extremo, pariter omnes beate cum Christo vivamus. ἀμα, pariter omnes, ut Rom. iii. 12." Rosenmuller. *q. d.* we may all live with one another, and with him.

⁶ *Encourage.*] παρακαλεῖτε. The word is the same as that which is used ch. iv. 18; which shows that the apostle is still insisting upon the same subject. It signifies either *to comfort* or *to exhort*.

⁷ *Edify.*] or, build up. "improve each other." Wakefield.

⁸ *As indeed ye do.*] Dr. Benson observes that "the apostle took every opportunity of speaking well of them where there was a foundation for it;" and adds that "praise mixed with exhortation renders it both more agreeable and of greater efficacy."

Ch. v.
Ver. 11.

place, and your own interest in it, let me earnestly exhort you seriously to reflect upon it, and to apply these weighty considerations to the best purposes. Encourage one another in the practice of duty; comfort one another under suffering and bereavement: improve each other in faith and love, in fortitude and piety. But I need not enlarge upon this topic. It is with great satisfaction that I hear how solicitous you are to promote each others advancement in Christian virtue; and I am persuaded that you are making rapid progress towards Christian perfection.

SECTION VIII.

THE APOSTLE concludes with some appropriate exhortations, with a general salutation, and with the apostolical benediction. Ch. v. 12—28.

1. The apostle recommends respectful and affectionate behaviour to their faithful teachers and superintendants, ver. 12, 13.

12. *Now we intreat you, brethren, to acknowledge those who labour¹ among*
13. *you, and preside over you in the Lord², and admonish you: and to love them exceedingly on account of their office; and live in peace with them³.*

I now proceed to offer a few hints of advice, as to your conduct towards the officers of the church. I mean those respectable persons who on ac-

¹ *Acknowledge those, &c.*] As no mention is made of bishops and deacons in either of the epistles to the Thessalonians, it is conjectured that the church was not then completely organized, and that its officers had not, at the time when the apostle wrote, assumed those names. But when a church was formed in any city, it was customary, and indeed absolutely requisite for the good order of the society, to select a few of the most intelligent and experienced persons to superintend the affairs of the society and to conduct public worship. These, whether regular presbyters or temporary officers, are the persons of whom the apostle is here speaking; and their office, as Dr. Chandler observes, was threefold: they were labourers in the ministry of the word, see 1 Cor. xv. 10, 1 Tim. v. 17; they presided in the meetings of the society, 1 Tim. *ibid.*; and they admonished, *i. e.* they exhorted and reproved, their hearers. The word denotes, says Dr. Chandler, affection and authority. The duties enjoined upon the Thessalonians towards their teachers were also threefold: they were to *know*, *i. e.* to reverence and respect them; to love them exceedingly; and to live in peace with them. See Chandler and Benson.

² *In the Lord.*] “in things relating to Christianity.” Newcome.

³ *Live in peace with them.*] *αὐτοῖς*. This is the reading of the Clermont and other manuscripts, and of many of the ancient versions. The common reading, *ἐαυτοῖς*, is also well supported, and gives a very good sense; though the other seems more agreeable to the connexion, and is marked by Griesbach as probable. “to live in peace with them, because of their office.” Wakefield.

count of superior age, experience, wisdom, and piety, were selected from among you to labour in the ministry of the gospel, to preach the doctrine of Christ to their unbelieving countrymen, and to preside in your Christian assemblies, to preserve order and decorum when you meet together for public worship; whose duty it is to instruct the ignorant, to admonish the irregular, and to maintain discipline and order in the church. Their office, while it is exercised with prudence, fidelity, and kindness, is both honourable and laborious, and in a high degree useful: it also exposes them to peculiar hazard. I intreat and I charge you therefore, my Christian brethren, to acknowledge these your superintendants under the character with which they are invested; to submit to their authority, to listen to their instructions, and to receive with humility and thankfulness their just and faithful animadversions and reproofs. Treat them with respect, provide liberally for their subsistence. Love them exceedingly, as indeed you ought, for the firmness and faithfulness with which they discharge the hazardous and painful duties of their station. Do not resent the freedom of their reproofs; and do not put them into competition with each other, and split yourselves into parties under different leaders.

Ch. V.
Ver. 13.

2. He reminds the presidents of the Christian society of the duties of their office, ver. 14.

But we exhort you, brethren⁴, admonish those who are disorderly⁵; comfort the feeble-minded⁶, succour the weak⁷, be of a patient spirit toward all⁸.

14.

⁴ *We exhort you, brethren.*] "I think," says Dr. Benson, "with the Greek and Latin interpreters, that the apostle here turned his address from the people to their spiritual guides and teachers; and that he exhorted them to do what in the preceding verses he had intimated to be their peculiar work and office." Dr. Hammond thought these officers to have been the bishops of the several churches subject to the metropolitan church of Thessalonica. "But," says Dr. Benson, "what may we not say if we indulge to fancy, or give way to warm imagination? The scripture is an utter stranger to metropolitan bishops with their suffragans, or to metropolitan churches with their subordinate churches: every congregation was a Christian church, and none of them subject to any other." Macknight agrees with Benson, that this exhortation is addressed to the teachers.

⁵ *Disorderly.*] *ατακτους*. "This," says Dr. Chandler, "is a military term, and denotes a soldier that breaks his ranks, deserts his post, or neglects his duty." It here alludes to that impertinent intrusion into other men's affairs, upon which the apostle insists more at large in the second epistle. 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12.

⁶ *Feeble-minded.*] *ολιγοψυχας*, *those of little souls*. It is used in the Old Testament as a translation of what in the Hebrew signifies *the humble in spirit*. Isa. lvii. 15. Dr. Chandler, from Aristotle, explains it of a person "who has a mistaken opinion of himself, and indulges worse thoughts of his own condition than he ought to do." Some of the Thessalonians might be oppressed with a sense of guilt, and others with a dread of persecution. These were men

Ch. V.
Ver. 14.

And as to you, my brethren in the ministry, I earnestly beseech you to persevere faithfully in performing the duties of your office, even such as require no small share of resolution and self-denial. Remind those who neglect their own concerns to meddle with the affairs of others, that the Christian religion requires that every man should attend to his proper business. Administer comfort to the dejected and desponding mind that distrusts its own resolutions, despairs of its final safety, and always bodes the worst. Afford needful assistance to those whose faith is feeble and wavering; who do not enter thoroughly into the liberal spirit of the gospel, and are in bondage to former superstitions. Teach them the rational and manly simplicity of the doctrine of Christ, and help them to throw off the yoke of servitude. Finally, bear patiently with those who are ignorant and dull, and even with those who are obstinate and refractory, and do not hastily give up your attempts to be useful, nor relax your exertions to instruct or to reclaim.

3. The apostle recommends mutual forbearance and universal good-will, and presses the duties of habitual cheerfulness, prayer, and thanksgiving, ver. 15—18.

15. *Beware¹ that none render evil for evil to any one; but always pursue kindness to each other and to all men.*

Acquire, my brethren, (and I now address you all,) the magnanimous and forgiving spirit of the gospel. Among your heathen neighbours it is accounted as honourable to avenge yourselves upon an enemy, as to requite a

who needed consolation and encouragement. “*Eos qui in adversis animo sunt dejecto.*” Rosenmuller.

⁷ *Succour the weak.*] *ἀντεχέσθε.* It signifies, to assist a person who is holding a burden at one end, by laying hold of it at the other. *q. d.* lend a helping hand, &c. See Rom. viii. 26. The *weak* were probably persons of scrupulous consciences, who laid stress upon rites and ceremonies, distinctions of food, and observance of days, &c.; being ignorant of the liberal spirit of the gospel. The superintendants of the church were to bear with their prejudices, and gradually to instruct them in the liberal spirit of the gospel. See Rom. xiv., xv., 1 Cor. viii. Benson and Chandler.

⁸ *Of a patient spirit.*] So Worsley. *μακροθυμεῖτε.* “The prejudices of some, the stupidity and want of capacity of others, and the infirmities of mankind in general, call for tenderness and great patience.” Benson.

¹ *Beware.*] “*Ὁρατε,*” says Dr. Chandler, “often denotes *take heed, beware.*” The apostle, now addressing the society at large, forbids the retaliation of injuries; which was a practice very common, and much approved both by Jews and heathen. Matt. v. 43. “But the words,” as Dr. Chandler observes, “are to be understood of private revenge only, not of seeking to the magistrate for protection from injury and violence. This is often necessary to the preservation of the public peace. But Christianity entirely forbids all private malice, enmity, and revenge: the instruction is absolute and universal.”

friend. Be you vigilantly upon your guard against this revengeful spirit. On the contrary, make it your study and your ambition to do good, and to show kindness to all men, upon all occasions; not only to Christians, but to unbelievers; not only to friends, but even to enemies: bless those who curse you, and pray for those who persecute you.

Ch. V.
Ver. 15.

*Be always joyful*².

16.

Let no losses, persecutions, or bereavements, depress your spirits, and produce unreasonable dejection. Your relation to God as your Father, your expectation of the speedy appearance of Jesus Christ, and your assured hope of living for ever with him in glory and happiness, may well comfort your darkest hours; and inspire you with an habitual joy and triumph, which the vicissitudes of life can neither destroy nor interrupt.

*Pray without ceasing*³.

17.

Let your lives be scenes of habitual uninterrupted intercourse with God. Meditate upon his character; adore his attributes; rejoice in his government; confide in his care; submit to his will; aspire after his favour; and express these grateful and joyful emotions of your hearts in suitable and appropriate language in the proper stated seasons of secret or of social worship, which will be more acceptable to God than the morning and the evening sacrifice. And let the fear and love of God possess and govern your hearts.

*At all times*⁴ *give thanks, for this is the will of God, through Christ Jesus, concerning you.*

18.

² *Joyful.*] "The advice means, Ever maintain a cheerful, easy, happy disposition in every condition and circumstance of life; not only in peace and plenty, but under affliction and persecution for righteousness' sake." Chandler. See Matt. v. 11, 12; 1 Pet. iv. 13, 14; Rom. v. 2.

³ *Pray without ceasing.*] Prayer is a direct address to God: but it is not at all essential to prayer that it should consist wholly or chiefly of petition. Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and the like, are at least equally becoming and equally important. The apostle could not mean to advise the Thessalonians to be always actually engaged in prayer, for that would be impossible. But he might mean to recommend an habitual impression of God upon the mind, and a spirit of habitual devotion. "This," says Dr. Priestley, "it is our duty and great happiness to cultivate. It is the perfection of the religious temper and character." The apostle is generally and justly thought to allude to the morning and evening sacrifice in the temple, which is called the continual burnt-offering, Exod. xxix. 38—42, Numb. xxviii. 24—31. The hours of sacrifice were nine in the morning and three in the afternoon; and these were the hours of prayer to the devout Jews, either in the temple or in private. And it is in allusion to this custom that the expressions, "dwelling in the house of God for ever;" "serving him day and night in his temple;" "Anna departed not from the temple," Luke ii. 37; "the apostles were in the temple continually," Luke xxiv. 53; &c. are to be understood. In this view the apostle is understood to recommend praying constantly, morning and evening. See an excellent note of Dr. Benson's on the text.

⁴ *At all times.*] So Mr. Wakefield; who thinks *καίρω*, or *χρονῶ*, to be understood here, as in 1 Tim. iv. 8, and elsewhere. "For every thing give thanks." Newcome. "Upon all suitable occasions, and in all the various events of life." Chandler.

Ch. V.
Ver. 18.

Possessed of the privileges, and animated by the hopes of the gospel, it becomes you, my Christian friends, at all times to maintain a grateful spirit. Be thankful, therefore, in adversity as in prosperity; in sickness as in health; in persecution as in a season of peace and liberty; under losses and bereavements as in the enjoyment of wealth and friends; in death as in life. This is the true spirit of the gospel; this is the spirit which God expects and requires of you, and for which the mission and doctrine of Christ lay a just and ample foundation.

4. The apostle offers advice concerning spiritual gifts, ver. 19—22.

19. *Quench not the spirit*¹.

Extinguish not that holy fire which has been kindled amongst you. Neglect not those gifts of the spirit with which you are severally endowed; use them not upon improper occasions; apply them not to improper purposes; interrupt not each other in the exercise of them; value them in proportion to their real importance; tempt not God to withdraw them from you; improve them to promote the knowledge and the success of the gospel.

20, 21. *Undervalue not prophesyings*²; but (like good money-changers) *prove*

22. *all things*³; *hold fast the best*⁴; *abstain from every kind of evil*⁵.

¹ *Quench not*, &c.] A beautiful allusion to Acts ii. 3, 4, where the descent of the holy spirit is said to have been accompanied with the appearance of tongues or spiral forms of flame, and to have resided upon each of the disciples present. A similar allusion is made by the apostle, 2 Tim. i. 6. "The spiritual gifts," says Dr. Benson, "like the fire upon the altar, could be kindled only from heaven; but might be stirred up, fed with fuel, or quenched by men."

² *Undervalue not*, &c.] ἐξβθευετε. "the word signifies," says Dr. Chandler, "a supercilious contempt of another, arising from pride and haughtiness, and overvaluing one's own qualifications." προφητειας, *prophecy*; which was of two kinds: foretelling future events, or public instruction; sometimes, probably, by supernatural suggestion. It appears from 1 Cor. xiv. that this gift was greatly undervalued in comparison with the gift of tongues, which, though more showy, was of less use. That chapter is a complete commentary upon this text; which, as is usual in epistolary writings, would otherwise have been totally unintelligible to us, though easily understood by those to whom the epistle was addressed. See Benson *in loc.*

³ *But* (like good money-changers) *prove all things*.] δε (*but*) is found in the best copies, and is admitted by Griesbach. It connects this with the preceding verse. "Paulus dicit, γινεσθε φρονιμοι τραπεζιται, *be skilful money-changers, prove all things*." Cyril. This sentence is also cited by Origen, Chrysostom, and many other ecclesiastical writers, as a text of scripture; some ascribing it to Christ, and others to Paul. It is not, however, to be found in any copy or version of the New Testament now extant. Perhaps, therefore, Lardner is right in the conclusion, that "a passage so often quoted, if it had ever been in the New Testament, could never have been lost out of it." The writers, therefore, who cite it, could in this case only mean that the advice was to be found in sense, but not in words: *q. d.* as dealers in money take great pains to distinguish the genuine from counterfeit coin, so do you take pains to distinguish between true and false doctrine. See Lardner's *Credib.* part ii. vol. iii. p. 376. It may, however, reasonably be suspected that the words would not have been so often quoted had they not been found in some ancient copies, and believed to be genuine. Upon the authority of Cyril, there-

There is a diversity in spiritual gifts. Some are more showy, and therefore more coveted, than others. To be enabled to instruct others in the doctrine of Christ is, however, a gift more useful than any of the rest, even though it may not be accompanied with the graces of elocution. Let not, then, this gift be undervalued and made light of; but let it be most highly esteemed by you. I do not, however, mean to say that you are to admit as true whatever any teacher may advance without due and diligent examination. No, my brethren, there is much error and false doctrine abroad, which assumes to be the doctrine of Christ. You must act like cautious dealers in the precious metals; you must learn, like them, to examine and to weigh; to distinguish counterfeit from sterling gold; rejecting what is spurious, and retaining, holding fast, and treasuring up, only that which is pure and genuine. But as to that doctrine which will not bear the process of trial, whatever pretensions it may make to the character of sound and evangelical Christianity, after due examination, reject it without hesitation, as worthless dross.

Ch. V.
Ver. 22.

5. The apostle prays that God would preserve and complete the virtues of their character, ver. 23, 24.

And may the God of peace⁶ himself sanctify you entirely. And may your entire person⁷, the spirit, and the soul, and the body, be preserved un-

23.

fore, I introduce them in this place, where they suit the connexion; but I introduce them with much hesitation. Dr. Whitby very justly observes, that "the apostle does not here bid the guides of the church try all things, and the people hold fast what they deliver unto them; but gives an injunction common to all Christians."

⁴ *The best.*] "το καλον, a hebraism for το καλλιστον." Wakefield.

⁵ *Abstain, &c.*] With Dr. Chandler, I connect this advice with the preceding. The word εἶδος signifies sort or kind, as well as appearance. "q. d. have nothing to do with such kind of prophecies as, after examination, do not appear to proceed from the spirit of God."

⁶ *The God of peace.*] This expression, in comparison with 1 Cor. xiv. 33, seems to imply that some confusion and altercation had already taken place in the church at Thessalonica, in consequence of a competition and rivalry of spiritual gifts, which the apostle was desirous to suppress. Dr. Chandler considers the same subject as continued from ver. 19—23: viz. "Quench not the spirit: improve and exercise his gifts. 'Despise not prophesyings: neither undervalue the gift, nor those who possess it. 'Prove all things: bring all prophecies to the test. 'Hold fast that which is good: such as appear worthy of the spirit embrace and adhere to. 'Abstain from all appearance of evil: what is not consistent with truth and holiness reject. And that you may do all this with temperance and candour, may God himself, who is the God of peace, who loves, approves, and commands it, sanctify you wholly, keep you pure and unmixed from the disorders and vices of the world; a peculiar separate people, devoted to his service and worship."

⁷ *Your entire person.*] See Chandler's note. The apostle here alludes to the philosophy of the Stoics, Platonists, and others, who represented man as consisting of three distinct parts: the spirit, or rational mind; the sensitive soul, the seat of the affections; and the body, the mansion of both. It is universally allowed that the apostle does not, in this passage, mean to

Ch. V. *blameable unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who*
 Ver. 24. *invited you, and he will perform his promise*¹.

For the credit of the gospel, and for your own credit and improvement, I am anxious that you should live in peace; that there may be no unpleasant rivalry or jealousy with respect to your spiritual gifts; and that your examination of doctrines may not be a source of personal animosity. And to this end, may that God, who is the author of the gospel of peace and the lover of concord, preserve you entirely in this, as in other instances, from the contamination of the unbelieving world. And O that every one of you might, in every respect, both as to mind and body, in thought, in inclination, and in outward action, be preserved perfectly innocent, and pure, to that day when you will be summoned to the tribunal of our common Master, Lord, and Judge! And be assured, my brethren, that the merciful God, who invited you to participate in the invaluable blessings of the gospel, will prove faithful to every promise that he has made. Be you true to yourselves and to your profession, and you need not doubt that your best wishes will be fulfilled, and your highest expectations will be exceeded.

6. The apostle requests an interest in their prayers; he sends his affectionate salutations; he requires the epistle to be publicly read, and concludes with a solemn benediction, ver. 25—28.

25. *Brethren, pray for us.*

My Christian brethren, those of you especially who are engaged in the work of public instruction, and who can, therefore, sympathize with us in our labours, our difficulties, and our perils, pray for us; that we may be duly qualified for our work, and successful in it; and that we may be delivered from the malice of unreasonable and wicked men. To know that we are the object of your prayers will be a source of comfort and encouragement to us.

26. *Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss*².

countenance, much less authoritatively to teach, the philosophy to which he here alludes. The same principle is applicable to other similar cases, *v. g.* to the doctrine of an intermediate state, and to those of apparitions and of demoniacal possessions, which were probably borrowed from the oriental philosophy. The apostles and evangelists were plain men, who were authorized to teach the plain doctrine of a future life, and a judgement to come; but who were not inspired to settle any nice questions in metaphysics or philosophy. See Benson *in loc.*

¹ His promise.] So the ellipsis is supplied by Mr. Wakefield: "He who called you may be relied on for the performance of his promise."

² A holy kiss.] This was an ancient eastern custom, Gen. xxvii. 26, Prov. xxiv. 26. In the

Assure my Christian brethren of my affectionate salutations and cordial good wishes for them. Ch. v.

I adjure you by the Lord³, that this epistle be read to all⁴ the holy brethren. Ver. 27.

This epistle, though addressed to the whole church at Thessalonica, will of course be delivered into the hands of you, my brethren, who are the superintendants of the church; and, as it contains some things which may possibly give offence to some professed believers, you may perhaps be unwilling to incur the odium of communicating it to the society. But to save you from that difficulty, I now enjoin it as a solemn charge, and require you, as you will be responsible for your conduct to our Lord and Master at his final appearance, that you do cause this letter to be publicly produced and read when every member of the society is present; that all may hear, and that each may apply the admonitions and precepts to his own case; and so that all may be instructed, warned, and edified.

The favour of our Lord Jesus Christ⁵ be with you. Amen. 28.

I conclude with expressing my earnest desire and prayer for you all, that you may all participate in the everlasting blessings of that gospel which is the free gift of God by Jesus Christ; and that you may be numbered amongst the faithful friends and followers of our great Master at his second coming. Amen.

Jewish synagogues the men and women had seats in different parts of the synagogue; and this custom was adopted by Christians in their places of worship. See Benson on 1 Pet. v. 14.

³ *I adjure you.*] Ὁρκίζω ὑμᾶς. *I lay you under the solemn obligation of an oath.* There were two forms of taking an oath among the Jews: when a man pronounced the oath himself, and when he was adjured by another. In all cases an execration was supposed to attend the oath. Our Lord answered upon oath before the high-priest. And the example of the apostle in this instance shows that oaths are not unlawful upon solemn occasions. Matt. xxvi. 63. See Benson and Whitby. Beza supposes this and the two preceding verses to have been addressed to the elders of the church. “προεσῴσι, sive presbyteris primum epistola in manus tradebatur. His salutem cæteris Christianis dicendam injungit apostolus, eosque monet, ne sibi solis epistolam servant, sed cum reliquis de plebe Christianis, prælegendo communicent.” Rosenmuller.

⁴ *Be read to all.*] Dr. Benson remarks, that “the epistle was to be read publicly to all the church. St. Paul was not for having the scriptures locked up from the common people; neither did he recommend it to them, before they read the scriptures, first to read a system of divinity drawn up by uninspired and fallible men.” “St. Paul, by adjuring them in so solemn a manner to read this epistle, might perhaps design to introduce the reading of his epistles into the Christian churches. They would thereby be led to regard them as the rule of their faith and practice as Christians.” “How easy was it,” adds this learned expositor, “for the primitive Christians to distinguish Paul’s genuine epistles from any counterfeit ones? when he sent them to the several churches by trusty and well known persons? when he ordered them to be read publicly upon the receipt of them? when he wrote them with his own hand, or took care to affix the salutation written with his own hand? And if the genuineness of them was once ascertained, how easy was it to transmit them to posterity!”

⁵ *The favour, &c.*] “The original word signifies both *favour* and the effect of it; the apostle doubtless included both.” Chandler.

THE SECOND EPISTLE

OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE THESSALONIANS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THE apostle in his first epistle to the Thessalonians had expressed himself so strongly concerning the second coming of Christ, the near approach of the day of judgement, and the serious interest both of himself and them in this awful event, that he seems to have excited a very general expectation in the minds of the Thessalonian Christians, of the immediate arrival of that solemn event; which excited great consternation and alarm. This alarm having been reported to the apostle, perhaps by the person who was employed to carry the letter, he thought it necessary to write immediately to check their unfounded apprehensions. This letter, therefore, he wrote from Corinth, while Silas and Timothy were still with him; whose names he joins with his own in the introductory salutation: and it is generally agreed that this epistle was written A.D. 52.¹

¹ Grotius is singular in supposing that this epistle was written previously to the former, that it was dated in the second year of Caligula, about A.D. 39, in whose extravagance and impiety the prophecies of the second chapter were fulfilled, according to Grotius's interpretation, who was very unwilling to allow that any of the predictions in the New Testament received their accomplishment in papal Rome. He supposes the epistle to have been addressed to a small

Of the genuineness of this epistle no doubt has ever yet been entertained. The original was authenticated by the concluding salutation, which was written with the apostle's own hand. It is a public epistle, addressed to a considerable body of Christians, to whom no doubt it was publicly read, and by whom it would probably be preserved with great care. And though it is the shortest of Paul's public epistles, yet it contains several passages in which the apostle alludes to discourses which he had delivered when he was at Thessalonica, or to events which happened at the time: which allusions, though necessarily obscure to a modern reader, would be well understood by the persons to whom the epistle is addressed, and would never have occurred to one who had attempted to forge an epistle in the apostle's name. Also the language and sentiments of the epistle harmonize with the apostle's character and professions as represented in Luke's history, or in the other acknowledged writings of Paul¹. Finally, this epistle is inserted in all the ancient catalogues of undisputed canonical books; it is found in all the best and most ancient manuscripts without exception, and in all versions; and it has been received and cited from age to age without dispute as the genuine production of the apostle Paul.

A more decisive proof, perhaps, of the genuineness of this epistle is the prophecy which it contains of the man of sin, chap. ii., so palpably fulfilled in the corruptions and usurpations of the antichristian church, and particularly in papal Rome.

It has been doubted whether the mistake of the Thessalonians originated in their misunderstanding the apostle's first letter, or whether some person had not forged a letter in the apostle's name, which he here disavows. The former supposition is probably the true one. No person who reads the first epistle to the Thessalonians can be surprised that the Christians to whom it was written should expect the speedy advent of Christ to judgement:

number of believing Hebrews who escaped from the persecution which followed Stephen's martyrdom, and who settled at Thessalonica. But he conjectures that the epistle was not sent till the reign of Vespasian. His arguments are trifling in the extreme; one is, that ch. iii. 17, he notes the manner of identifying his epistle: ch. ii. 13, he speaks of them as chosen to salvation from the beginning. The probability is, that this great man was influenced by his hypothesis more than he was himself aware.

¹ See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. x. The ingenious writer argues from the apostle's referring to his conversations with the Thessalonians for an explanation of the language of his letter, ch. ii. 5; from his refusal to accept a subsistence from the Thessalonians, and maintaining himself by his own labour, ch. iii. 8 (comp. Phil. iv. 15, Acts xx. 34); and from his correction of the mistake made by the Thessalonians of the annunciation of Christ's appearance in the first epistle.

though certainly the apostle gave no room for the expectation which they seem to have taken up, that this event would arrive in less than a year.

It has been judiciously remarked, that as the apostle in this letter does not repeat his cautions against impurity, nor his exhortations to respect their spiritual superintendants, there is great reason to believe that the advice he suggested in his former epistle had in these cases produced its proper effect. But the hints which he had given to officious and idle persons who neglected their own concerns to intrude into those of other men, to the great discredit of their Christian profession, not having been properly regarded by them, he animadverts upon them in the second letter with greater severity.

THE APOSTLE INTRODUCES the epistle with his usual evangelical salutation, joining the names of Silas and Timothy with his own, Ch. i. 1, 2. He then,

FIRST, Thanks God for the constancy and fortitude with which they suffered persecution; and comforts them with the assured expectation of the appearance of Christ to reward their fidelity, and to punish their enemies and persecutors; and prays that God would enable them to persevere to the end in their adherence to the gospel, ver. 3—12.

SECONDLY, He corrects the error into which they had fallen concerning the coming of Christ: He denies that he himself, or any person authorized by him, had ever declared that this event would take place immediately: He assures them that previously to this event a great and general apostasy would take place, the characters of which he particularly describes; but that even this apostasy would not happen till some great obstruction was removed. Ch. ii. 1—12.

THIRDLY, The apostle expresses his gratitude for their election to gospel privileges, and his hope that they will, by the grace of God, be preserved from the apostasy. He requests that they would pray for his success, and for his deliverance from persecution; and expresses his confidence that they will comply with his advice, and persevere in faith and virtue. Ch. ii. 13—iii. 5.

FOURTHLY, He enters a strong protest against the character and behaviour of those impertinent, idle, and disorderly persons who infested the church at Thessalonica, and disgraced the Christian profession. He earnestly admonishes such persons to reform their conduct; and he exhorts the rest to mark and shun the society of those who are incorrigible by other means, that they may be brought to shame and repentance, ver. 6—15.

FIFTHLY, The epistle concludes with the salutation and benediction written with the apostle's own hand, ver. 16—18.

“The sum of what has been said,” says Dr. Benson, “comes to this: viz. That this epistle may be looked upon as a supplement to the former; that the main point about which he wrote this second epistle was to rectify a mistake into which they had fallen concerning the speedy coming of Christ. But he has also added many other things of considerable importance: comforting the Thessalonians under their persecutions, and reprehending the idle and disorderly among them. These three things the apostle hath more especially laboured, that he might prevent the ruin or great decay of the Christian religion at Thessalonica. And it is to be hoped that he succeeded in his design. For we find from the *fathers* that there was a Christian church at Thessalonica many ages after this.”

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE, after a suitable introduction, gives thanks to God for the increase of their faith and love, and for their fortitude under persecution; he encourages them with the assurance of an ample recompense at the appearance of Christ, and concludes with affectionately commending them to the powerful protection of God. Ch. i. throughout. Ch. I.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

THE apostle introduces his epistle with the usual salutation, joining the names of Silas and Timothy with his own, ver. 1, 2.

PAUL and Silvanus, and Timothy¹, to the church of the Thessalonians, believers in God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ: Favour be unto you, and peace from God our Father², and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Ver. 1. 2.

¹ Paul, &c.] The opening salutation is the same with that of the former epistle, which, as Dr. Benson observes, may be regarded as a presumptive argument that the two epistles were written by the same person.

² God our Father.] "It cannot but be observed," says Dr. Priestley, "that, in the usual tenor of scripture language, God and Christ are carefully distinguished; the appellation of God being given to the Father only, exclusively of Christ, as well as of all other beings."

Dr. Benson very pertinently observes, that "when the apostle says *εν Θεω—και Κυριω*, in God our Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, it plainly shows that St. Paul did not design to say, ver. 2, 'God the Father of us and of the Lord Jesus Christ;' though our Lord did use an expression like that, John xx. 17. In this text, and in 1 Thess. i. 1, *εν* is to be understood before *Κυριω*, and *απο* before *Κυρις*. See 2 Thess. ii. 16; 1 Tim. ii. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2."

Ch. I.
Ver. 2.

We, who lately addressed an epistle to the church at Thessalonica, even I, Paul, with my associates Silas and Timothy, now unite in writing a second epistle to the body of Christians in that opulent and populous city; to those who distinguish themselves from heathen idolaters on the one hand, and from prejudiced Jews on the other, by believing in the unity and paternal love of God, and by a professed subjection to Jesus of Nazareth as their Master, and acknowledgement of him as the true Messiah. And as a testimony of our affection for them, we repeat our earnest wish that they may enjoy an abundant participation of the blessings of the gospel, which is, through Jesus Christ, the best gift of God to man.

1. The apostle thanks God for their increasing faith and love, and for their fortitude under those severe persecutions, the existence of which was a decisive proof of a future retribution, ver. 3—5.

3. *We ought to thank God¹ always concerning you, brethren, as it is fit; because your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all toward each other is increasing.*

The report which we have received of your character and conduct since we wrote our last epistle fills us with joy and gratitude. And as we have been accustomed in our daily exercises of social worship to give thanks to God for your profession of the Christian faith, and your exercise of Christian love, it is now our duty to express our gratitude for that distinguished improvement which you have made in these fundamental principles of Christian virtue, of which we have heard so favourable an account.

4. *So that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God, on account of your patience and fidelity under all the persecutions and afflictions which*
5. *ye endure; which are a proof² of the righteous judgement of God, that ye may be accounted worthy³ of that kingdom of God⁴, for which ye even suffer.*

¹ *We ought to thank God, &c.]* “In the former epistle the apostle thanked God for the beginnings of their faith, love, and patience, 1 Thess. i. 3, 6—10, ii. 14, iv. 9, 10; in this and the following verses he mentions their increase in these virtues. This is another confirmation of this being a second epistle to the Thessalonians.” Benson. It seems not unlikely that the messenger by whom the former letter had been sent had brought back to the apostle a favourable account of the improving character of the Thessalonian converts.

² *A proof, &c.]* “*ενδειγμα*, argumentum firmum unde colligi tuto possit, aliquando Deum gravissimas pœnas, ab adversariis religionis Christianæ sumpturum, et Christianos oppressos felicitatis æternæ, præmio ornaturum esse.” Schleusner. “*ενδειγμα, αποδειξις*.” Hesychius. “I know of no stronger proof,” says Dr. Benson, “of a righteous judgement to come, than the persecutions of good men, and the present triumphs of the wicked.”

³ *Accounted worthy.]* “*καταξιωθηναι*, dignum habeo, dignum reddo, nancisci aliquid, consequi, ut consequamini felicitatem æternam.” Schleusner. “A proof of the just appointment of

With much regret we hear that the cruelty of your persecutors does not yet relent. But having been also informed of the fortitude with which you undergo the severest sufferings, and of your faithful adherence, notwithstanding, to the profession and to the promises of the gospel, we cannot but congratulate you upon your heroic conduct; and we are continually boasting of you wherever we go, and holding up your example to other Christians, for their encouragement under similar trials. And be assured, my brethren, that such sufferings as yours, borne with such a temper and in such a cause, cannot fail of their proper recompense. They are themselves a proper proof of a future judgement under the righteous government of God; and are preparing you for a glorious station in that blessed and immortal state, the lively expectation of which supports you under all your sufferings.

Ch. I.
Ver. 5.

2. God himself regards it as an act of justice, that sufferers should be rewarded, and persecutors punished; and it is his will that this awful distinction should take place at the final appearance of Jesus Christ, ver. 6—10.

Forasmuch as it is just in the account of God⁵ to recompense affliction to those who afflict you, but to you who are afflicted rest with us⁶, when the Lord Jesus shall be manifested from heaven⁷.

6.

7.

God in vouchsafing to you that kingdom of God." Wakefield. "Counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which ye suffer. The sufferings you endure, you bear on account of it; animated by the hope of attaining it, and because you will not renounce your inheritance of it: and hereby God will manifest his own righteousness, and demonstrate the equity of his procedure in your being accounted worthy to be made possessors of it. For what can be a greater instance of equity in God, than that, as they bore their sufferings with constancy, he should reward their patience and fidelity, and approve himself faithful to his own engagements, by conferring the promised kingdom upon them?" Chandler.

In short, their worthiness consisted not in possessing a merit which might claim the reward as a right; but in acquiring those qualifications to which the promise was annexed.

⁴ *Kingdom of God.*] "Not the 'Christian church,' but the 'state of future happiness intended for virtuous believers.' The profession of the faith and hope of the gospel was the reason, both why their enemies persecuted them, and of their own amazing patience." See Benson.

⁵ *Forasmuch as it is just.*] "εἰπερ is not a note of doubting but of confirmation. See Rom. viii. 9." Benson. "Forasmuch as it is a righteous thing with God; i. e. in his judgement and estimation." Chandler.

⁶ *Rest with us:*] i. e. "the apostles and preachers of Christ." Chandler; who observes, that "the word we render *rest* sometimes signifies 'exemption from labour and hazard,' particularly of war; sometimes, 'remission from hard usage;' sometimes, 'the cheerful indulgence which is the effect of liberty:' q. d. being partakers with us in Christ's sufferings, you shall be partakers with us of his glory."

⁷ *When the Lord Jesus, &c.*] "that is," says Dr. Chandler, "when he shall leave for a season those heavenly mansions in which he now resides." "Jesus is now," says Dr. Benson, "in the third heavens, hid from mortal eyes." That there is some place in which Jesus now resides invisible to men, is an undoubted fact; and that this place may be called *heaven*, if by heaven be meant a state of honour, activity, and happiness, is equally indubitable. But that there is any such place above the clouds which corresponds with the popular notion of heaven,

Ch. I.
Ver. 7.

And I can assure you, my brethren, from the highest authority, that we are not deceived in the conclusions we draw from the persecutions of the virtuous and faithful, that there is a judgement to come. For the righteous God himself regards it as an equitable thing, and as that which the honour of his government requires, to protect the innocent sufferer, and to inflict a just retaliation upon their cruel persecutors. And the gospel revelation teaches us when this awful distinction shall take place. Your oppressors shall be punished; and you, together with us, who, like you, are exposed to continual persecution for the sake of Christ, shall enter upon your final and everlasting reward, on that day, when Jesus, our exalted chief, will appear again in the clouds of heaven.

8. *With the angels of his might, in flaming fire¹, executing vengeance on those who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord*
9. *Jesus Christ². These shall suffer punishment, even everlasting destruction³, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power⁴,*

where God manifests his peculiar glory, and where Jesus dwells at an inconceivable distance from this world and from all human concerns, is highly improbable; it is contrary to every correct idea of the structure of the universe, and is altogether destitute of proof. The apostles express themselves upon the subject according to the popular notions of the Jews; but they never profess that they were authorized to give a *sanction* to those notions, which were crude and unphilosophical in the extreme. The apostle Paul probably knew nothing more and meant nothing more than that, as Christ had ascended into the atmosphere, into the region of the clouds, and had there disappeared, Acts i. 9; so, at his last coming, he will again appear in the clouds, from whence he will descend to the seat of judgement. But as to his present local residence, as he knew nothing, so he says nothing about it. Dr. Priestley well observes, that "we see here, as in the former epistle, that these persecuted Christians are referred for their reward to the second coming of Christ to raise the dead and to judge the world. No hint is given them of any recompense between the time of death and the resurrection, which the apostle could never have overlooked if he had known of any such state."

¹ *Angels of his might, in flaming fire.*] Angels are any instruments, animate or inanimate, by which divine Providence executes its purposes. *Maim. de More Nevochim*, part. ii. c. 6. 42. The apostle uses these expressions perhaps in allusion to the appearance upon Mount Sinai, to heighten the ideas of his readers with respect to the solemnity and grandeur of the scene. How far they are to be understood literally, the event only can explain, and it would be fruitless to inquire.

² *Who know not, &c.*] Dr. Benson thinks, that "by 'those who know not God,' the apostle means *heathen persecutors*; and by 'those who obey not the gospel,' *Jews*." He adds, "There is no doubt but Christ will at last punish professed Christians who have not obeyed the gospel, as well as infidels; but I do not apprehend that that is said here." The word *Χριστῶ* is omitted in some of the most ancient manuscripts and versions.

³ *These shall suffer punishment, even everlasting destruction.*] Dr. Priestley observes, "that these terms, literally interpreted, would imply that the wicked are to be finally destroyed. But the term *destruction* is often used in scripture to denote calamity in general, and such as has its period; and if the wicked be raised from the dead and continue to exist, it is not possible, unless the constitution of their natures be entirely changed, but that their sufferings will in length of time work a favourable change in the state of their minds, so that after an adequate punishment their sufferings may be remitted." Dr. Chandler says, "The word *ολεθρος* never implies an entire extinction of the thinking principle; but that in this connexion it ex-

when he shall come in that day to be glorified by his saints, and to be admired by all those who have believed, and by you particularly⁵, because our testimony among you hath been believed. Ch. I.
Ver. 10.

He will then appear in the awful pomp of a sovereign and a judge, amidst lightnings and thunders, armed with divine power to execute the just judgments of God upon the enemies and persecutors of his church, whether heathen or Jews. These shall, in their turn, be dragged to the bar of eternal justice, and shall hear that sentence of condemnation passed upon themselves which they have been so eager to pass upon you. And this awful sentence to a punishment worse than death, the intensity and duration of which will be far beyond all thought and expectation, will most assuredly be executed upon them to its utmost extent, by their offended Judge, in the exertion of those great powers which will be communicated to him for that purpose. And in that tremendous day when he shall thus inflict vengeance upon persecutors, he shall be celebrated, with transports of joy and anthems of praise, by his chosen friends, for the faithful performance of all his promises; and the

presses the entire extinction of that life which they receive at the resurrection by the reunion of the soul and body." "This destruction," says he, "this second death, shall be final and irreversible." But what is to become of the thinking principle, the soul, after it has been thus finally separated from the resurrection body he does not say, nor how long its connexion with that body is to continue.

The apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 22, assures us, that all who die in Adam shall be made alive in Christ. But no one can doubt that the resurrection here announced is a resurrection to happiness: all mankind, therefore, will be raised to a life of ultimate happiness. But in the text we are told, that they will be punished with everlasting destruction; which, however, as Dr. Chandler well observes, does not signify extinction of being. To reconcile the apostle to himself, therefore, it must mean *a suffering that will end in happiness*: q. d. The wicked shall be punished till he ceases to be wicked, till wickedness is destroyed. Or, perhaps, till he himself is weary of existence: he shall seek for death and it shall flee from him.

⁴ *From the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power:*] i. e. to an exclusion from his presence: or, this punishment will be inflicted by an act of the glorious power of Christ, who will then be visibly present.—"which destruction shall proceed from the Lord, and the fearful exertion of his glorious power." Newcome.

⁵ *When he shall come in that day, and by you particularly.*] This is Dr. Benson's construction of this obscure passage, and it appears to me the most eligible. He observes, that the trajection of the words *in that day* is exactly similar to Rom. ii. 12, 16; also that supplying the ellipsis by the words *by you particularly*, saves the parenthesis and makes the sense clear. Others, however, think this construction harsh and inadmissible.

The apostle declares that the wicked shall be punished at the same time when Christ shall be glorified and admired in and by all true believers, and consequently in and by the Thessalonians; who will then, and not before, be admitted to their final triumph. Grotius and Chandler take *επισευθη* in the sense of *επισευθησεται*: q. d. Because in that day our testimony concerning you shall be believed, or will be evidently confirmed. Believers will admire when they see the accomplishment of the divine word. One copy reads *επισωθη*: this reading Mr. Wakefield approves, and renders the passage thus: "When he is come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired on that day by every believer of our testimony which was established among you by proof."—"eo quod doctrina nostra vobis proposita certa reperietur illo die." Rosenmuller.

Ch. I.
Ver. 10.

hearts of those who have believed in his doctrine shall exult with grateful admiration, when they see how far the displays both of his mercy and his justice exceed their highest expectations. In this solemn and magnificent scene I rejoice to think that you, my friends, will bear an honourable and glorious part, because you gave credit to the doctrine which we taught you, and in circumstances of great difficulty and danger you have faithfully adhered to the profession of the gospel.

3. The apostle prays that God would enable them to carry into effect all their pious and benevolent purposes; by which they would do honour to the gospel, and promote the interest of Christianity in the world, ver. 11, 12.

11. *To which end we also pray for you always, that our God would make you worthy of this calling, that he would execute with power every kind*
12. *purpose of generosity¹ and work of faith, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified by you² and ye by him, according to the grace of our God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

And that you may not be disappointed of this glorious hope, it is the subject of our earnest and daily prayer for you, that God would in his great mercy increase and perfect your qualifications for that divine reward, to the expectation of which you are invited by the gospel. And we further pray that he will by his efficacious energy enable you to carry into complete effect all the kind and generous purposes of your hearts, and to produce those

¹ *Every kind purpose of generosity.*] Dr. Chandler observes, that "the word *αγαθωσύνη*, though several times used in the New Testament, is never applied to God, but always to men; and signifies the virtue of *beneficence*, or goodness of disposition. He therefore renders the passage thus: "that God would fulfill every kind intention of generosity." Mr. Wakefield's translation is, "that our God would make you worthy of this call, and fully execute with power every intention of goodness and work of faith."

² *That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified by you, &c.*] viz. "that when their enemies saw their exemplary charity, their fortitude and patience, &c. they might have a high veneration for him by whose name they were called, and be prevailed on to embrace his religion." Chandler.

The address of the apostle in this first part of his epistle appears to me to have escaped the notice of most expositors. The main design of the epistle is to correct the error of the Thessalonians, in supposing that the day of judgement was very near at hand. This error appears to have excited in their minds the greatest terror and alarm, and the correction of it would have a tendency to lead them to the contrary extreme of carelessness and security. To guard against this danger, the apostle states in the strongest language the certainty and solemnity of the event, and affectionately reminds them of their own interest in it. Archbishop Newcome has a similar remark: "This epistle," says he, "furnishes a remarkable instance of St. Paul's manner. The Thessalonians appear to have concluded that the day of judgement was approaching. The apostle wrote to correct that error; and he shows in this chapter how full his mind was of the subject, which he does not directly enter on till the beginning of the second chapter."

fruits of benevolence and good works which are the genuine result of a well-grounded faith in the Christian doctrine. Thus by your excellent example the Christian religion will be recommended to the notice, the esteem and love of your heathen neighbours; and in return you will yourselves derive unspeakable benefit and everlasting honour from the profession and practice of this divine religion: a recompense which indeed neither you nor we can claim upon the ground of merit and of right, but which is the free gift of the infinite mercy of God, abounding to true believers through Jesus Christ our Lord, whom he has constituted the messenger of his grace to a sinful world.

Ch. I.
Ver. 12.

SECTION II.

THE APOSTLE states and rectifies the error into which they had fallen concerning the immediate appearance of Christ to judgement; and foretells a great apostasy which would previously take place. Ch. ii. 1—12.

Ch. II.

1. The apostle cautions them against supposing that he had ever intended to affirm that the day of judgement was to take place immediately, ver. 1, 2.

Now we intreat you, brethren, concerning³ the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our assembling unto him⁴, that ye be not hastily shaken from your right mind⁵, nor greatly alarmed⁶, as though we by the spirit had taught or written⁷ that the day of the Lord is instantly coming⁸.

Ver. 1.

2.

³ Concerning, &c.] This is very generally allowed to be the proper interpretation of ὑπερ in this connexion, where it seems to be used for περί, which is indeed the reading of two manuscripts. See Griesbach.

⁴ Our assembling, &c.] “our being raised from the dead to stand before his tribunal.” Newcome. This is not exactly the idea: the Thessalonians expected the immediate appearance of Christ, and consequently that they should be summoned into his presence without dying.

⁵ Shaken from your right mind.] Σαλευω is used of ships that are tossed by the waves: either “be not so agitated as to lose the quiet possession of your minds, or to be moved from the true sense of my words in a former letter.” Chandler.

⁶ Greatly alarmed.] Θροσεισθαι, to speak, to sound, to be struck with terror. Hesychius.—“strepitu percellor, ac perterrefio, a θρυος, clamor tumultuantium.” Schleusner. “It expresses surprise and trouble at the report of disagreeable news. Matt. xxiv. 6, Mark xiii. 7.” Chandler.

⁷ As though we by the spirit had taught or written.] Literally, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us. Spirit is often used for inspiration, 1 John iv. 1, 6. This was the report which alarmed them, that the apostle by inspiration had declared or written, &c.

⁸ That the day of the Lord is instantly coming.] The best copies read Lord for Christ: see

Ch. II.
Ver. 2.

I am concerned to hear that you have by some means fallen into a very great mistake with respect to that most solemn and certain event, the public appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ to raise the dead, and to convene all the tribes, and every individual of mankind, to his tribunal, to receive their final and awful sentence from his lips; and that you expect this great event to happen in the course of a few months. I am further informed that it is reported among you that I am the author of this persuasion, and that it is in consequence of something which I have said, or written, under the immediate influence of inspiration, that this alarming expectation has been excited. It is by no means surprising that such intelligence should have excited in your minds the utmost consternation. But I intreat you, my brethren, to calm your spirits; for I solemnly assure you, that how firmly soever I may believe, and how earnestly soever I may desire to inculcate, the certainty, the solemnity, and the speedy approach of the appearance of Christ, and whatever strong expressions I may have used in my last epistle, which you may have interpreted in too literal a sense, or whatever reports may have been circulated by others concerning me, I never did declare, or believe, that this great day was so near at hand as you now apprehend.

2. He assures them that a remarkable apostasy would first take place, the characteristic symptoms of which he particularly describes, ver. 3, 4.

3. *Let no one deceive you¹ by any means; for the apostasy must first come²,*

Griesbach. *Will come instantly: "ενεσχηκεν, quasi instet dies Christi: nempe hoc anno: instare dicitur quod jam præsens est. Rom. viii. 38; 1 Cor. iii. 22, vii. 26; Gal. i. 4; Heb. ix. 9."*

Grotius. "that the day was now instantly coming." Chandler. "They might possibly apprehend that Christ would come in a few months, weeks, or days; and it was of very great moment to rectify that mistake." Benson.

¹ *Let no one deceive you.*] It is possible that the error of the Thessalonians might have originated in a misconception of the apostle's own strong language in his first epistle, ch. iv. 15, v. 2—4; and that rumours once propagated might be exaggerated without any intention to deceive. But the advice here, connected with the particular direction at the close of the epistle, ch. iii. 17, how to distinguish a genuine from a spurious letter, may perhaps justify the suspicion that some one had forged an epistle in the apostle's name. See Benson.

² *The apostasy must first come.*] See Mr. Wakefield. The expression in the original is elliptical: *ὅτι εἰ μὴ ἐλθῇ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον*. "For, that day will not come, unless there come a falling away first." So Archbishop Newcome. The apostasy. The article seems to imply that it was an event which he had mentioned to the Thessalonians before, ver. 5. "The word signifies," says Chandler, "'a hostile separation of one part of a nation from another,' 'rebellion against a prince,' or, 'a mutinous revolt of soldiers against their general.' In this place it apparently means a revolt from God." Rosenmüller, in his notes upon this chapter, after having stated the opinion of Hammond, who considered Gnosticism as the great *apostasy*, and Simon Magus as the *man of sin*—of Schoetgenius, who understood the revolt of the Jews as the *apostasy*, and the pharisees and rabbis who provoked the revolt as the *man of sin*—of Grotius, who believed Caligula to be the *man of sin*, and the wickedness and impiety of his reign to be

and the man of sin³ be revealed, that son of perdition who setteth himself in opposition to, and exalteth himself above, every one that is entitled divine

Ch. II.
Ver. 4.

the *apostasy*—of Wetstein, who interprets the *apostasy*, of the civil wars of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, and the *man of sin*, of Titus Vespasian, and the Flavian family—and of Koppe, who supposes that the apostle alludes to Dan. xi. 36, and to prophecies then current of calamities which should precede the reign of the Messiah, declares his own judgement to be in favour of Noesseltus, who interprets the *day of the Lord*, as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, the *apostasy*, to the revolt of the Jews, and the *man of sin*, to the false prophets and Messiahs, who urged them on to revolt; and particularly to the zealots, of whose impieties and cruelties during the siege of Jerusalem, Josephus has given so affecting a description. And he supposes that he who restrained the *apostasy*, was Claudius, during whose reign the Jews remained quiet. This whole doctrine it is believed that the apostle learned from the prophecy of Christ in the evangelists. That the apostle alluded to Christ's more awful appearance to judge the world, this critic does not deny; especially as it appears that our Lord's prophecy in Matthew terminates with a description of the final judgement. But he makes no distinction between the two events in this passage, either because the Thessalonians did not distinguish them, or that he himself confounded them. “*Conjungit Paulus mentionem utriusque adventus sive quod sciret utrumque a Judæis, quales fuerunt Thessalonicenses, nullo modo discerni, sed unum in tempus conjici, sive quod ipse tempus nesciret.*”

The great objection to this hypothesis is, Why need the Thessalonians give themselves so much concern about the revolt of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem? He answers, that all their trouble and persecution came from the Jews: “*habebatque maximam vim ad animos Thessalonicensium Christianorum tranquillandos denunciatio, fore ut Romani Judæorum furore lacerati horum seditionem ulciscerentur, contra Christiani, labefactata Judæorum impotentia liberarentur a perpetua Judæorum vexatione.*”

But why then regard this event with terror rather than exultation? The answer to this will hardly be deemed satisfactory: “*quum id quod inopinatum accidat, celeriterque opprimat animum, terribile videri soleat.*” The suddenness of the event, however desirable, excited consternation. The words *δια πνεύματος*, ver. 2, Noesseltus and Rosenmuller refer to our Lord's prophecy, Matt. xxiv.

[³ *The man of sin.*] Dr. Benson, in his admirable *Dissertation upon the Man of Sin*, has stated and well confuted various interpretations which have been given to this prophecy, and in common with most protestant expositors, he explains it of the *papal power*. His arguments are irrefragable as far as they go. But I agree with Mr. Evanson, in his Letter to the Bishop of Worcester, that the antichristian power is by no means limited to the church of Rome, but that it extends to all civil establishments of a corrupt Christianity, of which the papal power forms only one, though a very conspicuous, feature. The eastern as well as the western, the protestant as well as the popish churches, are included in this comprehensive symbol; and, if I am not mistaken, it will easily appear to an attentive observer, how much more correctly and literally the prophecy is accomplished when applied to this object, and explained upon this large scale, than upon any other interpretation. *The man of sin*: “one who was to commit all sort of wickedness himself, and to lead others into sin.” So Dr. Chandler, from a Greek commentator, which is the sense adopted by almost all expositors; but I conceive without sufficient reason. In the language of the New Testament, *sin* signifies *heathenism*; and *sinner* are *heathen idolaters*. *Publicans* and *sinner* are *tax-gatherers* and *heathen*. The woman who washed and anointed our Lord's feet was a *sinner*, Luke vii. 37: *i. e.* probably a notorious idolater. See Gal. ii. 15, “*sinner* of the Gentiles.” The words *man of sin*, therefore, are probably intended to express that the apostate church would be an idolatrous power.

“There have been various interpretations,” says Dr. Priestley, “of this famous prophecy; but I cannot help thinking that the application of it to those corruptions of Christianity that we call *popish*, and to that astonishing usurpation of power by the bishops of Rome, is by much the most easy and natural. That the apostles had an historical knowledge of the fulfilment of this prophecy, is not probable. The real use of prophecy respects those who see the accomplishment of it.”

Ch. II.
Ver. 4.

or august¹, so that he placeth himself in the temple of God, exhibiting himself as a god².

Let no person mislead you intentionally, or otherwise, by pretending to any authority from me to contradict the doctrine which I plainly taught you from the first. For I now repeat the assurance which I then gave you, that near and certain as the appearance of our Lord is, it will be preceded by another very remarkable event: a general and almost total apostasy from the purity of the Christian faith, and from the meekness and humility of the Christian spirit. Little as you may expect it, a formidable idolatrous power will make its appearance; which, after having proved the ruin of multitudes, will itself in the end be totally exterminated. This singular power will set itself in violent opposition to, and will upon every occasion exalt itself above, the civil, and even the imperial authority. And in the temple of the true God, in the Christian church itself, in which none but spiritual authority, the authority of reason and revelation, ought ever to be exercised, this wicked demon will insolently intrude itself, usurping and openly and avowedly exercising civil authority, for purposes the most unjust and oppressive.

3. The apostle reminds them that he had communicated this information to them before he left them, and that he had likewise told them by what circumstances the immediate appearance of this apostasy was prevented, ver. 5—7.

5. Remember ye not, that whilst I was yet with you I told you these things?

¹ Who exalteth himself above every one entitled divine or august.] Θεὸν ἢ σεβασμᾶ, god or emperor. "Σεβασμᾶ, omnem rem sacram, quæ sanctè et cum religione colitur, significat, 2 Thess. ii. 4. Deorum omnium, omnisque divini cultus, superbus contemtor, ut Koppius recte transtulit. Quem Wetstenius (N. T. T. ii. p. 310.) Titum, sive domum Flavianam, non autem ut aliis visum est Pontificem Romanum, aut Caium, aut Simonem Magum, esse arbitratur." Schleusner.

Civil magistrates are called gods; august, σεβασμᾶ, alludes to the title of the Roman emperor, Acts xxv. 25. It means that the antichristian power should set up itself as a rival to, and even claim superiority over, the civil power, not even excepting that of the emperor himself. A fact sufficiently notorious in the history of mankind.

² So that he placeth himself in the temple of God.] The received text reads, "he places himself as God; but the words ὡς Θεόν, as a God, are not found in the most ancient manuscripts and versions, and are properly omitted by Griesbach and Newcome. The temple of God is the Christian church, 1 Cor. iii. 9, 16, 17; 1 Tim. iii. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 5; Rev. iii. 12. Such was the interpretation of the ancient Christian writers. See Benson. Exhibiting himself as God: i. e. though professing to be an ecclesiastical power, he usurps and exercises civil authority. "The word καθίσαι," says Chandler, "should have been translated he seateth or placeth himself; it denotes insolent and violent intrusion. And the word that we render show, should have been translated publicly declaring himself that he is a God, contrary to all law, reason, and truth."

Do you not recollect, that while I was personally labouring among you, I plainly stated all these things upon divine authority? and could you suppose it possible that I should now teach a different doctrine?

Ch. II.
Ver. 5.

And ye know what restraineth now³, that he may not be revealed till his proper time⁴. For the mystery of iniquity is already inwardly working⁵, only till he who now restraineth it shall be removed out of the way⁶.

6.

7.

And if you recollect yourselves, you will remember that I told you what that other power now existing is which prevents the immediate appearance of this antichristian power, and keeps it back till the time destined for the public manifestation of it. For, to say the truth, much of this corrupt and overbearing spirit already exists in the church, but at present it works privately, and is kept under restraint; and so it will continue to be, till the abolition of that power which at present keeps it in check.

4. The apostle mentions some further particulars concerning the character, the progress, and the termination of the apostate power, ver. 8—10.

And then shall that lawless one be revealed⁷, whom the Lord Jesus will

8.

³ *Ye know what restraineth now.*] The apostle means the *Roman power*. This he had explained to the Thessalonians when he was with them. At present he only hints at it; that he may not lay himself open to the charge of disloyalty and disaffection to the Roman government. See Newcome. "This," says Dr. Benson, "was the opinion of all the ancient commentators both Greek and Latin."

⁴ *That he may not, &c.*] "Literally, 'to the end that he may be revealed in,' &c." Newcome.

⁵ *Is already inwardly working.*] So Macknight. Even in the apostolic age the Christian doctrine began to be corrupted by the Gnostics and Docetæ, and an ambitious spirit began to show itself very early; but it was, in a great measure, kept under, while Rome was under heathen emperors.

⁶ *Only till he, &c.*] So Dr. Chandler; who maintains that there is no ellipsis. Mr. Wakefield's version is, "but he who now hindereth must be removed, and then," &c. Chrysostom says, When the Roman empire shall be taken away, then shall the *man of sin* come; when that shall be overthrown, he shall invade the vacant seat, and attempt the empire both of man and God." Benson.

⁷ *That lawless one, &c.*] *ὁ ἀνομος*. "who sets himself up above all laws, human and divine." Chandler. Grotius, who interprets the *man of sin*, of the emperor Caligula, understands the person here predicted of Simon Magus. He is singular in his opinion. Expositors almost universally regard the whole description as relating to one and the same object, the antichristian power. Protestant interpreters commonly apply the description to the church of Rome; but it is more applicable to the establishment of a *corrupt and persecuting Christianity* by the civil power, in the reign of Constantine the Great. This took place, agreeably to the language of the prophecy, immediately upon the downfall of the Pagan empire, whereas popery, properly so called, did not commence till some centuries afterwards, as protestants themselves allow. And why, indeed, should one apostasy be foretold rather than another? why the corrupt, persecuting, idolatrous establishments of the West, rather than those of the East? Aye, why the apostate, usurping, oppressive Catholic, rather than the apostate, persecuting, Protestant church, of every description, almost without exception? for all, when in power, have been equally intolerant; all have made themselves drunk with the blood of the

Ch. II.
Ver. 8.

*consume with the breath of his mouth, and will disable with the manifestation of his presence*¹.

When this restraining power shall be overthrown, then, as I before told you, that apostate power which will act in opposition to the laws both of God and man, will immediately discover itself. But be assured, that whatever character it may affect, or whatever tyranny it may exercise, its duration shall be limited. It may prevail to a degree of enormity beyond what could possibly have been expected, but error, idolatry, and violence, shall gradually recede before the progressive influence of the doctrine of Christ, and this formidable phantom shall vanish and disappear before the glorious and irresistible light of evangelical truth. So that, antecedently to the appearance of Christ to judgement, this great apostasy shall be destroyed, and the pure uncorrupted principles of the gospel shall universally prevail. In the mean time great evils and disorders will arise from the temporary ascendancy of the antichristian power.

9. Even him *whose coming is according to the operation of Satan*², with

martyrs of Jesus ; all have bound upon the necks of those whom Christ made free, an iron yoke grievous to be borne ; all have enforced their respective creeds by pains and penalties ; all have propped up their disjointed fabrics by fraud and falsehood, by fine and imprisonment, by torments and death ; and if Popery has slain its ten thousands, Protestantism may at least boast of having slain its thousands.

Wherever, therefore, a church professing Christianity exists, wielding the power of the state to establish and support its own corrupt, unscriptural, and idolatrous system, there is a limb of the great *apostasy* ; there, in the temple of God, sits the *man of sin*, exalting himself above all that is called God's, whose coming is according to the operation of Satan, and whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and consume with the brightness of his appearance.

¹ *Whom the Lord Jesus will consume, &c.*] The word *Jesus* is inserted by Griesbach upon the best authorities. *αναλωσει*. "This word," says Dr. Chandler, "is generally used of a gradual consumption : viz. 'the waste of time ;' 'the consumption of an estate ;' or, 'being devoured by worms ;' by 'the breath of his mouth,' he understands, 'the doctrine of the gospel,' which first dooms him to destruction, and then gradually accomplishes it. Rev. xix. 15, Isa. xl. 4." *καταργησει*, he explains, *to render ineffectual*, to strip him of his authority and power by means of a superior force. See Ezra iv. 21, 23, v. 5, vi. 8 ; and by the *coming of Christ* he understands, "the clear manifestation of his doctrine, and the prevalence of it among mankind." This interpretation appears to be very rational, and has been adopted in the paraphrase. It may perhaps be thought an objection to it that the best copies for *αναλωσει* read *ανελει*, which expresses rather a sudden and forcible, than a gradual removal. See Griesbach. See Grot. in ver. 7. Some understand the expression, of the facility with which Christ will destroy the *man of sin* at his appearance. Comp. Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9. So Benson. "This may refer to some signal overthrow of the papal dominion before the day of judgement." Newcome. See Rev. xviii. xx., which many suppose to refer to the same event. Others again think that the apostle refers to the coming of Christ to judgement, and that the *apostasy* will continue to that time. The event alone will fully explain the prophecy. Dr. Benson observes, that "the latter part of this verse should be inclosed in a parenthesis."

² *According to the operation of Satan.*] *Satan* is a word of various import both in the Old Testament and the New. It signifies *opposition* ; and is often put for the principle of opposition personified, Matt. xvi. 23. In Luke x. 18, it plainly signifies the *heathen idolatrous power*,

*all false miracles and signs and wonders*³, *and with all iniquitous deceit among those that are lost*⁴, *because they received not the love of the truth that they might escape*⁵. Ch. II.
Ver. 10.

The power to which I allude is an idolatrous power, exalting itself in the Christian church, and armed with civil authority; and, like other heathen superstitions, it will endeavour to support itself by persecution, and by false pretences to miraculous powers, to arts of sorcery, and other gross delusions, which may impose upon the understandings of the weak and ignorant.—And these impostures will have great effect upon a race of men who, while they profess the Christian name, will be utter strangers to the genuine principles and spirit of the Christian religion; and who will have fallen into this wretched state in consequence of a criminal indifference to truth, and a disgraceful neglect of those important doctrines, an habitual and practical regard to which would have preserved them from so shameful a degeneracy.

5. The apostle further declares, that this delusion should be permitted to prevail, as a just punishment of professing Christians for their indifference to truth, ver. 11, 12.

*And for this reason, God will send them a mighty delusion*⁶, *to believe* 11.

which was to recede rapidly before the light of the gospel. Rev. ii. 13, “thou dwellest where Satan’s seat is.” Here it signifies the *idolatrous persecuting power*. See also Luke xxii. 31. In Rev. xii. 10, xx. 2 and 7, it seems to be used for the *antichristian persecuting power*, and in that sense it appears to me to be used here. The *man of sin*, the lawless one who was to be displayed immediately after the heathen empire was overthrown, was to be both an idolatrous and a persecuting power, and was to use the same methods, both of fraud and violence, to impose upon and to mislead those who were indifferent to truth, which had been used by heathen and idolatrous persecutors. This was notoriously the case with that corrupt Christianity which was supported by the civil power under Constantine, and with all corrupt establishments of Christianity to the present day, of every description, and in all parts of the world.

³ *With all false miracles, &c.*] “The word *ψευδεις* seems equally to belong to all the foregoing substantives.” Wakefield.

⁴ *Those that are lost.*] “in a state of final perdition, while guilty of religious imposture.” Newcome. But I think the expression refers to the deceived rather than to the deceivers; and that it denotes their being lost to the Christian religion, rather than their exclusion from final salvation; for no doubt there are many virtuous characters, even in the most corrupt church, as there also were even in the heathen world.

⁵ *They received not the love of the truth that they might escape.*] *i. e.* that they might escape from apostasy and from those delusions of the *man of sin*, from which the love of truth would effectually have preserved them. *To be saved*, in this connexion, no more relates to *final salvation*, than *to be lost* in the preceding clause relates to *final perdition*. Dr. Chandler justly observes, that “an upright, honest regard to truth and righteousness is the surest preservative in the world against destructive errors.” See also Benson on ver. 11.

⁶ *God will send them a mighty delusion.*] “will permit to prevail among them, not overruling second causes.” Newcome; who renders the clause, “a mighty working of error.” “such effectual delusion.” Wakefield. It means a delusion of the grossest kind, which shall induce them to believe the most palpable absurdities and falsehoods, and to receive them as fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Ch. II.
Ver. 12.

*that lying power*¹, *to the end that*² *all might be condemned*³ *who believed not the truth, but took pleasure in iniquity*⁴.

A practical belief of the genuine doctrines of the gospel is, as I have just observed, the great preservative from error and vice, and indifference to truth lies at the foundation of all the future corruptions of the Christian religion, both in faith and practice. As a just punishment for this want of enlightened and active zeal, God will permit so strong a spirit of delusion to possess the apostate church, that men professing Christianity will openly reject its most obvious and salutary truths, and greedily imbibe the most gross, palpable, and pernicious errors. The consequence of which will be proportionate depravity of morals; which, with regard to multitudes, will terminate in just and insupportable punishment.

¹ *That lying power.*] So Wakefield. They would not embrace the sacred truth of the gospel, and therefore they must entertain that error, those false and lying doctrines which were contrary to and subversive of it.

² *To the end that.*] "*iva* in this verse expresses the event." Newcome.

³ *Might be condemned.*] "judged and condemned by the righteous sentence of God." Chandler.

⁴ *Who took pleasure in iniquity.*] "in such deceit." Wakefield. "The word signifies, 'entirely to approve and acquiesce in any thing as matter of their choice, and perfectly agreeable to them.'" Chandler.

Dr. Chandler adds, "I think it is impossible we should be at a loss how or where to apply this prophecy. Every part of it is such a perfect description of the papacy of the church of Rome, that if St. Paul had been alive, and seen the usurpation, and pride, and apostasy of that See, he could scarce have described it in stronger and in livelier colours, or by more peculiar and distinguishing characteristics, than he hath done in the prophecy before us." It cannot indeed be denied that the church of Rome is a very considerable branch of the apostate church; but it is not the whole of it. And there are other churches, nearer home, which, if the apostle Paul had visited, it is much to be feared that he would have found even in them, both in doctrine and in practice, too near a resemblance to that corrupt idolatrous doctrine, and that arrogant persecuting spirit, which was to characterize the apostasy of the latter days.

There is no reason to regard establishments *as such*, that is, the protection and encouragement of Christianity by the civil magistrate, as constituting a mark of the apostate church. Those establishments only are antichristian which support corrupt doctrine and idolatrous worship: such as that of Jesus Christ, the holy spirit, the Virgin Mary, and other dead men and women; and above all, when these corrupt doctrines and heathenish practices are enforced by pains and penalties and persecutions. This completes the character of the *man of sin*. And to say the truth, there are many churches not established by law, who exhibit as much of the spirit of the apostate church as popery ever did. What can we think of those who in the seventeenth century, when petitioning for their own toleration, expressly stipulated that their Antitrinitarian brethren should be excluded? Or of their descendants in the present day, who while applying for the repeal of persecuting statutes which bear hard upon themselves, insist that chains much heavier than their own shall continue to bind the consciences of catholics? If this be not the spirit of antichrist, it is hard to say what is.

SECTION III.

THE APOSTLE expresses his gratitude to God for their election and invitation to the privileges of the Gospel; exhorts them to steadfastness; offers his prayers for them, and requests theirs for himself and his associates, and declares his entire confidence in their good principles and virtuous resolutions.—Ch. ii. 13—iii. 8. Ch. II.

1. The apostle gives thanks to God for their election, and for their invitation to participate in the privileges and blessings of the gospel, ver. 13, 14.

But we ought⁵ always to give thanks to God on your account, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit⁶, and belief in the truth: unto which he hath invited you through our gospel, to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ver. 13. 14.

Think not, my dear brethren, who are most highly favoured by God, that it is my intention to represent you as in the number of those who will be justly condemned because of their indifference to truth. On the contrary,

⁵ *But we ought, &c.*] The apostle having denounced the judgements of God upon those who through indifference to truth had exposed, or would expose, themselves to gross and pernicious delusions, proceeds to comfort the Thessalonians, by assuring them that they were not the persons to whom he alluded; and by expressing his confidence in their adherence to the Christian doctrine. The apostle speaks of them as *beloved of God*, in the Jewish sense of the words, as being distinguished by privileges: see Rom. ix. 13. They were chosen from the beginning, as having been selected to receive the benefit of the gospel soon after its first publication in Macedonia. Acts xvii., 1 Thess. ii. 2. They were chosen to salvation, or rather to deliverance: see ver. 10. *i. e.* to a deliverance from idolatry and vice. This was accomplished by belief of the truth, *i. e.* by a profession of faith in Christ; and by sanctification of the Spirit, or a visible separation from the unbelieving world by the gifts of the holy spirit. Rom. viii. 15—17. Being thus chosen, they were by the preaching of the apostles invited to the profession of the gospel; and the great design of all was, that they might obtain final happiness, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, that of which he is now in possession, and which he has promised to bestow.—Thus we see how little mystery there is in the apostle's doctrine, if his expressions are interpreted in a fair and proper sense, and how little foundation is laid in the scriptures for the strange doctrines of absolute and unconditional election and reprobation by an eternal and arbitrary decree. See Chandler and Benson.

⁶ *Sanctification of the spirit.*] “*πνεῦμα* denotat illa dona spiritus, quibus Thessalonicenses convicti de veritate, et emendati mente fuerunt, ipsa doctrina Christi, quæ, quoniam perfectior est lege Mosaica, sæpe in N. T. *πνεῦμα* appellatur.” Rosenmüller. So Wakefield, by a *spiritual purification*. More correctly, as I think, Dr. Chandler: “by the spirit in his extraordinary gifts God gave them the assurance that he had accepted them: this was the wonderful evidence and sure token that God had sanctified, and separated them to himself.”

Ch. II.
Ver. 14.

I continually thank God on your account, as I am in duty bound, that it was his pleasure to select you among the first of your countrymen to be rescued from the bondage of ignorance and idolatry, to be consecrated to himself and separated from your heathen neighbours by your profession of the Christian faith, and your participation of the gifts of the holy spirit: and our gratitude is still further enhanced by the recollection that we ourselves were honoured as the messengers to communicate to you the glad tidings of the gospel, and to invite you to enter into the Christian community; the privileges of which, if duly improved, will ensure your ultimate admission into that everlasting state of glory and felicity which Jesus our master has revealed, of which he, as our forerunner, is already in possession, and into which he will finally introduce all his faithful followers.

2. The apostle exhorts them to steadfastness in their profession of the gospel, and prays for their establishment in it, ver. 15—17.

15. *Therefore, brethren, stand firm¹, and hold fast² the lessons³ which you have been taught by us, whether by discourse or by letter.*

Possessed of these privileges, and animated by these hopes, let no consideration induce you to forfeit your glorious prize. Whatever assaults may be made upon your faith and virtue, stand fast; hold firm, and do not for a moment abandon those precious truths which we taught you when present, and have written to you since we departed, and which lie at the foundation of all our immortal expectations.

16. *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself⁴, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and graciously given⁵ us everlasting consolation and*

¹ *Stand firm.*] *στηκετε.* “This word,” says Dr. Chandler, “is used to denote great firmness, constancy, and resolution, in maintaining our purposes, standing unmovably against, and vigorously resisting, all opposition.”

² *Hold fast.*] *κρατειτε.* “It signifies to hold by conquest, and firmly to maintain what we have in possession.” Chandler.

³ *The lessons.*] *παραδοσεις.* “It sometimes signifies unwritten traditions, transmitted from generation to generation. Here it cannot have that sense, and would more properly have been rendered *institutions* or *doctrines*.” Chandler. So Wakefield. “the truths, whether respecting doctrines or facts.” Newcome.

⁴ *May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, &c.*] “This is only another mode of praying that these Christians may obtain all the blessings of the gospel of which Christ is the founder; and the expression is not to be understood literally, as if Christ had himself immediate access to the hearts of men, and administered consolation to them. Indeed God himself does this only by means of natural causes: by such knowledge as is naturally adapted to produce that effect. In like manner, God gives us our daily bread, but not in a miraculous way.” Priestley.—Chandler and Benson understand this as a direct prayer to Christ.

⁵ *Graciously given.*] So Wakefield. “by the gospel scheme has inspired us with eternal consolation.” Harwood.

good hope, encourage your hearts and establish you in every good doctrine and work. Ch. II. Ver. 17.

Persevere, my Christian friends, and may our lord and master Jesus Christ assist you by his doctrine, by his example, by his promises, and by the gift of his spirit. And may the great God himself, his Father and our Father, who has approved his paternal affection towards us by freely and gratuitously imparting to us the rich consolations and everlasting hopes of the gospel, grant his blessing to your virtuous efforts, encourage and comfort you amidst perils and sufferings, establish your faith in the doctrine of the gospel, and render that faith abundantly productive of the fruits of holiness and universal virtue.

3. The apostle requests that they would pray for his protection and success, ch. iii. ver. 1, 2.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the doctrine of the Lord may run and be glorified⁶, even as among you⁷: and that we may be delivered from inconsistent⁸ and wicked men; for all are not faithful⁹. Ch. III. Ver 1. 2.

Upon this subject little remains to be added. I request your prayers for myself and my associates in the ministry, that we may not labour in vain: but that the gospel of Christ, which we preach, may advance with a rapid and glorious career, and that it may be as successful here at Corinth and in

⁶ *Run and be glorified.*] "an allusion to the races in the ancient games, in which he who ran with the greatest speed obtained the most honourable prize. The apostle prays that the gospel may spread through the nations with the greatest speed, that it might obtain the crown of success." Chandler. "may have free course." Newcome. "that the doctrine of the Lord may continue running and gaining glory." Wakefield.

⁷ *Even as among you.*] "This is giving them the highest commendation, and speaking of them in the most respectful manner." Chandler.

⁸ *From inconsistent, &c.*] ἀποπων. "There is scarcely any English word," says Dr. Chandler, "which exactly answers it. The ancient glossaries variously expound it, by *wicked, filthy, strange, lawless, irrational, absurd*. It signifies something which *has not place*; and, by an easy figure, what is *absurd, indecent, unbecoming*, and excites *surprise*." The expression here is, as he observes, "perfectly agreeable to the place before us;" as the apostle refers probably to converted Jews, who endeavoured to depreciate his character, and oppose his doctrine, whose conduct therefore was peculiarly inconsistent, and might justly excite surprise. The apostle was at Corinth when he wrote this epistle, where a formidable party was soon formed against him, at the head of which was some eloquent judaizing Christian; and he might already discover with pain the symptoms of this bad spirit in the Corinthian church. Indeed it is certain that he did observe it; which was the reason that he conducted himself there with peculiar caution, and refused to receive any remuneration for his services. 2 Cor. xii. 13, xi. 9—12.

⁹ *All are not faithful.*] Literally, *all men have not faith*; a frivolous observation, if he meant only to say, "that all were not believers:" but very pertinent and much to his purpose if he intended to assert that, "though they professed to believe, they were not faithful to his doctrine." See Chandler; who renders the words, "credit, or trust, is not due to all."

Ch. III.
Ver. 2.

other places as it has been at Thessalonica, and may produce the same effects of love and good works amongst others which it produces among you. And pray likewise for us, that the object of our ministry may not be defeated by those absurd and inconsistent professors of Christianity, who from prejudice, or pride, or other bad motives, oppose our doctrine and depreciate our character. For, strange as it may seem, persons of this description are not uncommon among us, and men professing to be believers in Christ, are in fact enemies to Christian truth, and to those who teach it.

4. He expresses his cheerful hope that by the assistance of Christ they will adhere faithfully to the doctrines and the precepts of the gospel, ver. 3—5.

3. *But the Lord¹ is faithful who will establish you, and preserve you from*
4. *the evil one². And we have confidence in the Lord³ concerning you, that*
5. *ye both perform and will perform what we enjoin you. And may the Lord*
direct your hearts unto the love of God, and the patience of Christ⁴.

It is however a satisfaction to think, that though men are treacherous Christ is faithful. His doctrines are true: his promises shall be fulfilled to their utmost extent: his gospel shall support you under all your trials: it shall keep you from sinking in the season of persecution: it shall preserve you from apostasy, and from returning to your former subjection to the powers of darkness. And indeed I am fully persuaded that you are so firmly attached to the principles of the gospel, that you will continue to comply cheerfully with all my apostolical injunctions, as you now do, and have hitherto done.

¹ *The Lord.*] I am inclined to think, with most expositors, that Christ is the person here intended; and that, by a figure of speech, he is said to do that which is accomplished by his doctrine and promises.

² *From the evil one.*] τὸ πονηρὸν. See Chandler and Wakefield: *i. e.* will preserve you from apostasy; from returning again to the dominion and empire of Satan, the symbolical monarch of the unbelieving world, whose authority you renounced when you became the subjects of Christ. *The evil one*, the devil, Satan: *i. e.* "the adversaries of the gospel; especially the unbelieving Jews." Benson.

³ *We have confidence in the Lord, &c.*] *q. d.* We entertain a pious and Christian confidence concerning you; being conscious of the authority by which we speak, and of the power of Christian principles; believing you to be sincere in your profession, and recollecting your past fidelity and perseverance, we are confident that, by the help of God, you will continue to obey our injunctions.

⁴ *May the Lord—patience of Christ.*] "The equivalent antecedent is here used for the pronoun, as John iv. 11." Newcome; who, with the common version, renders the words, *the patient waiting for Christ*. The literal translation is, *the patience of Christ*: *i. e.* says Dr. Chandler, "the patience which Christ exercised; as Jam. v. 11, the patience of Job, is that patience of which he was so great an example."

And may your increasing knowledge of the principles, and your happy experience of the power and excellence, of that gospel which by the command of Christ, whose servants and messengers we are, we have communicated to you, produce its genuine effects upon every heart! May it particularly guide you to that first of duties, the love of God, the most ardent gratitude for his great mercy by Jesus Christ, manifesting itself in all its genuine effects of love and good works! And may nothing move you from the profession of the gospel; but in all your dangers, your trials, and your sufferings, look to your great exemplar Jesus Christ: imitate his patience, fortitude, and magnanimity; and, supported by his grace, be willing to suffer as he suffered before you.

Ch. III.
Ver. 5.

SECTION IV.

THE APOSTLE animadverts upon the conduct of some idle, officious and disorderly persons in the church of Thessalonica; recommends quiet and industry after his own example: orders that the untractable should undergo the censure of the church, and concludes with the apostolical benediction written with his own hand. Ch. iii. 6—18.

1. He cautions the Thessalonian Christians to avoid the society of idle and disorderly persons, ver. 6.

Now we command you⁵, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw yourselves from every brother who walketh irregularly⁶, and not agreeably to the instructions which they received from us⁷.

6.

⁵ *We command, &c.*] The apostle had given the Thessalonians a hint in his former epistle, 1 Thess. iv. 11, against idleness and officious intrusion. This advice, however, appears to have been little regarded by those to whom it was addressed. And the apostle having been informed, perhaps by the messengers who had returned after having carried his first letter, that this idle meddlesome spirit had increased, possibly under the pretext that the day of judgment being so near it was of no use to attend to any worldly concerns, in this second epistle he animadverts upon it with greater severity, and very properly holds out his own example of industry and independence, to show that a belief in the approaching advent of Christ ought by no means to slacken their attention to the duties of their stations. The apostle here expresses himself with a tone of authority. "The word," says Dr. Chandler, "implies an authoritative order such as generals give to their soldiers, or princes to their subjects."

⁶ *Who walketh irregularly.*] *ατακτως* "who does not keep his rank, and by breaking it puts others into confusion; a military term." Dr. Chandler.

⁷ *Instructions which they received from us.*] *παράδοσεις*, traditions. See ch. ii. 15; they re-

Ch. III.
Ver. 6.

I regret that I am under the necessity of again introducing a disagreeable subject which I mentioned in my last letter, especially as I find that my friendly cautions have not been attended with the desired effect. I now, therefore, my beloved brethren, in the name and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, require and charge those of you whose conduct is irreproachable, to withdraw yourselves immediately from the society of those professors of the Christian religion who neglect the Christian discipline and rule of life, whose behaviour is a disgrace to their profession, who treat my instructions and admonitions with contempt, and whose misconduct introduces confusion and disorder into the church.

2. The apostle states his own exemplary conduct while he resided among them, in working diligently for his subsistence though he had a right to a maintenance from them, ver. 7—9.

7. *For ye yourselves know how it becometh you to imitate us. For we*
8. *were not irregular among you: nor did we eat any man's bread at free cost. But with labour and fatigue, we worked night and day, that we might not be burthensome to any of you*¹.

You recollect without doubt perfectly well the instruction which we gave you, and the example which, from the knowledge we had of the character of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, I and my associates thought it advisable to exhibit for your imitation. In no respect did we deviate from our character as Christian teachers: nor did we encourage idleness by our example. We accepted gratuitous support from no one: but while we employed the day in teaching publicly and privately the doctrine of Christ, we worked hard, early and late, at our manual occupations, in order to procure subsistence for ourselves, that we might neither put any of you to inconvenience to maintain us, nor encourage others by our example to fasten themselves upon you for support.

9. *Not because we were destitute of authority*², *but to make ourselves an example to you, that ye might imitate us.*

ceived from us: i. e. either by word of mouth while we were with you, or by the epistle which we lately sent. The received text reads, "he received."

¹ *With labour and fatigue, &c.*] See 1 Thess. ii. 9. The apostle probably knew that there were many idle people at Thessalonica who would profess Christianity, if they could be maintained by it in idleness and gossiping. To preclude expectations of this kind, he and his associates waved their claim to a maintenance, and worked diligently at their manual occupations to earn a subsistence. Yet it appears that even this would not have been sufficient for their support without the kind assistance repeatedly sent to them by the Philippians, Phil. iv. 16.

Though we maintained ourselves, it was not because we had no just claim upon you for a decent and liberal support: for it is but reasonable, and Christ has directed, that a suitable compensation should be made to the preachers of the gospel for the occupation of their time, and thoughts, and labours. But in this instance we waved our just right for the sake of setting a beneficial example to you. CH. III.
Ver. 9.

3. The apostle reminds them of the maxim which he had laid down to discourage idleness.

For indeed³, when we were with you, we gave you this charge, If any man will not work, let him not eat⁴. 10.

That the design of our example might not be mistaken, we accompanied it with positive precept, and gave you this maxim as a warning against idleness, That the man who will not do what he can to support himself, has no right to expect to be supported by others.

4. He advises idle and officious persons to mind their own business and to live in peace, ver. 11, 12.

For we hear that some among you walk irregularly, doing no business, but being impertinently busy⁵. Now those who are such, we charge and exhort, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that they work quietly and maintain themselves⁶. 11.
12.

The admonition which I suggest is but too seasonable. For I am credi-

² *Not destitute of authority.*] See 1 Cor. ix. 1—14, 2 Cor. xi. 7, &c. “Not because we have no right.” Newcome.

³ *For indeed.*] We worked with our own hands, for we had laid down this maxim, &c. and we were willing to show that our doctrine and practice were consistent. See Benson.

⁴ *If any man, &c.*] “It is not charity to support idleness; nor have they any right to eat bread, who can labour for it, but refuse.” Chandler; who observes, that “by the laws of Solon, idleness was discouraged, and by those of Draco it was punished with death.” “This seems to have been a proverb both among Jews and heathen.” Benson.

⁵ *Doing no business, but being impertinently busy.*] μηδεν εργαζομενους, αλλα περιεργαζομενους. Dr. Chandler observes, “There is a turn of words in the Greek which can scarcely be imitated in any other language: *q. d.* We hear there are some who do no business, but are busy-bodies. The word signifies, ‘to be curious and inquisitive into the affairs of others, impertinently to meddle in things in which we have no concern.’” Perhaps they might ramble from house to house, and dissuade every body from working, pretending that Christians now had nothing to do but to talk about the day of judgement. This idleness and impertinence would create much mischief in families, and expose Christianity to great scandal among unbelievers. Dr. Benson has a good note upon the great evil of a busy, meddlesome, calumniating spirit in general, especially of religious detraction. But possibly the misconduct of the Thessalonians upon which the apostle so justly animadverts, was merely such as I have represented.

⁶ *And maintain themselves.*] Literally, *eat their own bread: i. e.* “the bread earned by their own industry.” Newcome.

CH. III.
VER. 12.

bly informed, through the same channel by which I learned your great error concerning the day of judgement, that some among you who make a profession of the Christian religion act in a manner very unworthy of their character, making use of the general expectation of the immediate appearance of Christ, or of some other plea equally groundless, as an excuse for idleness. And as though all attention to secular business were now superfluous, they totally neglect their proper occupations, and going about from house to house, they intrude into the concerns and disturb the peace of their neighbours with their senseless babbling. Now, as the apostle of Christ, I strictly charge, and as affectionately concerned for their welfare I earnestly exhort and intreat, all persons of this description to reform their conduct immediately, and as they tender the authority of Christ, and value their connexion with the Christian community, to return to their occupations without delay, to keep themselves quiet, and to support themselves by their own industry; so that they may give no trouble to their fellow Christians, and may offer no occasion to unbelievers to report that Christianity encourages idleness and impertinence.

5. The apostle gives advice to regular and well-disposed Christians how to conduct themselves with respect to such as are idle and disorderly, ver. 13—15.

13. *But, brethren¹, be not ye weary² in well-doing³.*

As to you, my Christian friends, who are not chargeable with the faults upon which I have animadverted, I intreat you not to be discouraged from the practice of virtue, nor to be restrained from acts of benevolence and sympathy, by the occasional abuse of your kindness by these unworthy intruders.

14. *And if any one disobey our injunctions in this epistle, mark that man⁴,*
15. *and hold no intercourse with him⁵, that he may be ashamed⁶. Yet, regard him not as an enemy, but admonish⁷ him as a brother.*

¹ *But, brethren.*] The apostle having finished his advice and reproof to the culpable, now addresses himself to those Christians who had supported a good character, and gives them advice suitable to the occasion. See Benson.

² *Be not ye weary.*] “The original word signifies ‘to fail in any thing through negligence, sloth, or dejecting fear.’” Chandler, from Hesychius.

³ *Well-doing.*] “Not virtue in general, but the practice of kindness and beneficence. Gal. vi. 9.” Benson. He adds, “The ancients thus interpreted the words, ‘let not their sloth hinder your charity in giving them what is necessary to preserve life.’”

⁴ *Mark that man.*] Grotius and Le Clerc understand the advice, *q. d.* “signify that man in an epistle to me.” This is a sense that the words will bear, but the common interpretation better suits the connexion. See Benson and Chandler.

⁵ *Hold no intercourse.*] “avoid his company, keep him at a distance.” Chandler.

Further, if it should happen, which indeed I am unwilling to suppose, that any one of these officious meddlers should persist in wilful disobedience to the advice I have now given, you will do well to pass a suitable censure upon him: and agree among yourselves to hold no intercourse with him, and not to admit him into your houses. This, if any thing, will bring him to himself, it will make him ashamed of his conduct, and will produce reformation. But do not carry your censures too far; do not, immediately at least, exclude him from the Christian church: but as a fellow Christian, who has been misled, suggest to him those considerations which will bring him to a better mind.

Ch. III.
Ver. 15.

6. He expresses his good wishes for them all, ver. 16.

Now the Lord of peace himself⁸ give you peace⁹, by all means, at all times¹⁰. The Lord be with you all. 16.

Beware that you do not interrupt the peace of the church on the one hand by an intrusive spirit, or on the other by harsh censure. And may Jesus Christ, the great messenger of peace, by the spirit of his gospel, communicate and preserve to you, at all times, and without interruption, the invaluable blessing of peace in its most extensive signification. May his gospel, with all its blessings, be the portion of you all without exception.

7. The epistle concludes with the benediction written with the apostle's own hand, ver. 17, 18.

The salutation by the hand of me Paul, which is my token in every 17.

⁶ *That he may be ashamed.*] *ἵνα ἐντραπή.* "The word," says Dr. Chandler, "is very emphatical; it includes the double notion both of shame and of a change of sentiment and conduct."

⁷ *Regard him not as an enemy, but admonish, &c.*] They were not to excommunicate, but to admonish, *νουθετεῖτε.* "The word," says Dr. Chandler, "signifies to rebuke, correct, or chastise for a fault." The apostle advises that it should not be managed with too great severity.

⁸ *The Lord of peace.*] "May the Author of all good grant you all kinds of happiness." Dr. Priestley. I rather, with most interpreters, suppose that Christ is the person intended. "He," says Dr. Chandler, "is called by Isaiah the Prince of Peace, because he has reconciled both Jews and Gentiles to God and to one another, creating peace between God and them, and commanding them to follow the things that make for peace."

⁹ *Give you peace.*] *i. e.* by his gospel infusing a pacific spirit. This prayer, or rather devout wish, was peculiarly seasonable; as impertinence of intrusion on the one hand, and severity of reproof on the other, might provoke contention.

¹⁰ *By all means, at all times.*] So Mr. Wakefield; who, upon the authority of the Syriac and Æthiopic, leaves out *τροπω*, and understands *καιρω*. Many good copies read *τοπω*, *place*. See Griesbach.

Ch. III.
Ver. 18.

epistle. Thus I am wont to write¹. The favour of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen².

The body of this epistle is written by a person whom I employ for that purpose; but the salutation which follows is in my own hand. This is the mark by which the genuineness of an epistle of mine may always be known, so that you will be in no danger of being imposed upon by any spurious letter pretended to be sent by me. Observe the hand-writing, in which I express the following cordial wish for your happiness. May the gospel, with all its blessings, which is the free gift of God by Jesus Christ, be yours, now and for ever. Amen.

¹ *Thus I am wont to write.*] ἔτω γράφω. Mark xv. 6. "He released: i. e. he was wont to release." Benson, Glassius. The apostle seems to have suspected that somebody had forged an epistle in his name, see ch. ii. 2; and therefore he gives them a token by which they may always distinguish a genuine from a spurious epistle, viz. the form of the concluding benediction, and its being wholly written by himself. Some suppose he wrote in cypher; but this supposition is unnecessary. It is probable that he wrote Greek ill, Gal. vi. 11; and the peculiarity of his hand-writing would be a sufficient proof of its genuineness. The expression in every epistle implies, that these Epistles to the Thessalonians were not the first which the apostle had written; but as they are of the earliest date of those which are still extant, it is obvious that some epistles which the apostle wrote are lost.

² *The favour, &c.*] "May all the blessings of the gospel attend you." Dr. Priestley.

THE FIRST EPISTLE

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

TIMOTHY was a native of Lystra, a city of Lycaonia in the Lesser Asia. His father was a heathen, but his mother was a Jewess, and both she and her mother were persons of eminent piety, who had taken great pains to instruct Timothy from his childhood in the knowledge of the Jewish scriptures. 2 Tim. i. 5. iii. 14, 15. These pious women had probably been converted to the Christian religion during the first visit which the apostle had made at Lystra A.D. 47, when he and Barnabas, after having been worshiped as Gods, because of the miraculous cure of the lame man, were persecuted at the instigation of the unbelieving Jews, and the apostle Paul was nearly stoned to death by the mob. Acts xiv. The second visit which the apostle made to Lystra was A.D. 51, when Timothy being grown up to manhood, and having obtained by his exemplary conduct a high reputation among the Christians at Lystra, and Iconium, and his father being probably dead, the apostle determined to take him as an associate in the mission. Acts xvi. Having been set apart for this purpose by prayer and imposition of hands

by the elders of the church, 1 Tim. iv. 14, and endued with spiritual gifts by the apostle, he accompanied Paul and Silas in their journeys: nor does it appear that he ever afterwards left the apostle, except when he was deputed upon some special mission. And Paul joins the name of Timothy with his own in the inscription of several of his epistles.

The time when this epistle was written has been a subject of considerable discussion. It is generally concluded that it was written to Timothy at Ephesus, soon after the apostle had quitted that city to go into Macedonia, ch. i. 3. One such journey is recorded in the history of the Acts, ch. xx. But as it appears, from the first epistle to the Corinthians, that Timothy was not with the apostle at Ephesus when he wrote that epistle, and as in this letter to Timothy he expresses an expectation of returning speedily to relieve him from the burdensome office which he had imposed upon him, it has been argued, that this epistle was not written to Timothy upon that occasion, but in the course of another journey, which is not mentioned by Luke; and which is supposed to have taken place about A. D. 65, after the apostle's release from his first imprisonment¹.

But as, when the apostle took leave of the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, Acts xx. 25, he solemnly declares that he *knew* that they would see his face no more, it is unreasonable to believe that he ever visited Ephesus again, unless we have the most direct and indisputable evidence of the fact: but no such evidence is produced; and many circumstances are alleged which are thought to make it probable that this epistle was written during the journey recorded by Luke. From the similarity between the directions given to Timothy and those addressed to Titus, it seems probable that these epistles were written nearly at the same time: and we have some reason to conclude that the epistle to Titus was sent by the apostle before he left Ephesus. It seems likewise evident, from the very particular description which the apostle gives of the qualifications of bishops and deacons, that Timothy's business at Ephesus was to select proper persons for these honourable offices; but it is very improbable that the churches in and about Ephesus should have been left in an unorganized state, till after the apostle's release from his first imprisonment. Indeed, we know that they were not so; for the elders or bishops of Ephesus came to meet the apostle at the port of Miletus, in his way to Jerusalem. The apostle when writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor.

¹ The advocates of this hypothesis are Pearson, Whitby, Basnage, Cave, Fabricius, Mill, Paley, and Macknight.

xvi. 11) exhorts, that no person should despise Timothy on account of his youth, and in this epistle (ch. iv. 12) he advises the evangelist to conduct himself with such gravity and circumspection that no person may treat him with contempt because of his youth. These epistles therefore were probably written nearly at the same time. And this advice would be more suitable to the age of Timothy at this time, than it would ten years afterwards, when he had passed the season of youth. It is true that the evangelist was not at Ephesus when the epistle to the Corinthians was written: but the apostle undoubtedly expected to see him before he left Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 11), and when he departed he might expect to return soon; intending perhaps to proceed directly to Corinth and to return immediately; but meeting Titus in Macedonia, he received from him such an account of the state of things at Corinth, as induced him to postpone his visit to that city for a year. Instead therefore of returning to Timothy at Ephesus, he directed Timothy to come to him at Macedonia; where we accordingly find his name united with the apostle's in the inscription of the second epistle to the Corinthians, which probably was not written till more than a year after the epistle to Timothy. For these reasons Dr. Lardner and others have concluded that this epistle was written from Troas, or Macedonia, late in the spring, or early in the summer of A.D. 56, before the apostle had had an interview with Titus².

Nevertheless, the objections against this hypothesis appear to me absolutely insurmountable. It is morally impossible that the apostle Paul, writing in confidence to his pupil and associate Timothy, immediately after he had left Ephesus in consequence of the tumult excited by Demetrius and the artists, in which his own life had been exposed to the most imminent peril, and appointing him during his absence to superintend the concerns of the church at Ephesus, should not in the whole course of the epistle make the most distant allusion to those dreadful disturbances, by which he had himself been driven from the city probably some weeks or months sooner than he intended. And the argument derives tenfold strength from the consideration that in the second epistle to the Corinthians, which was written more than a year afterwards, when his feelings must of course be considerably abated, he alludes to the tumult at Ephesus, and to the dangers to which he had been exposed in Asia, in language almost expressive of horror; which plainly shows how sensibly the recollection even at that distance of time affected his

² This is the opinion of Lightfoot, Baronius, Estius, Benson, Doddridge, Lardner, Grotius, Hammond, Witsius, &c.

feelings, and how deep an impression these scenes had left upon his mind. Whereas, in the epistle to Timothy, written when he had hardly recovered from the first alarm, he takes no more notice of Demetrius's tumult than if it had never happened. In fact, nothing can be conceived more quiet than the apostle's mind appears to have been from the beginning to the end of the epistle. This state of mind would have been utterly impossible in the supposed circumstances.

It seems therefore necessary to look out for another date to this epistle; and I beg leave, with great diffidence, to offer one which, though not wholly free from difficulties, appears to me less objectionable than either of the preceding hypotheses.

If Dr. Ashworth's supposition, which, to say the least, is as probable as any other, be allowed; namely, that the apostle Paul visited Crete in some portion of the three years which are assigned for his residence in Ephesus and its vicinity, taking Titus with him as his associate in that mission, he would probably leave the concerns of the church at Ephesus in the hands of the evangelist Timothy, who had been his companion in the ministry about four or five years. And as it is possible that the apostle might be induced to undertake this mission, on a sudden, in consequence of some unforeseen opportunity which occurred, he might not have had time to communicate to Timothy those particular instructions which it would be necessary to give to so young a man when he was invested with such an important trust. He avails himself therefore of the first opportunity which offered after his arrival in Crete, to dispatch a letter containing specific directions for his conduct in the arduous circumstances in which this youthful evangelist had been left: which epistle would also be his warrant with the Ephesians for any measures which he might think necessary to pursue. This was the First Epistle to Timothy: which, therefore, if these suppositions be allowed, ought to be dated from Crete.

This hypothesis seems to afford the easiest explanation of all the circumstances. It accounts for the style and tone of the epistle, as addressed to the evangelist when he was very young; and more especially, for that particular detail of the qualifications of those who were to be selected as officers of the church, which would not have been so necessary to a person of maturer age and experience. It easily accounts for the total silence of the apostle upon the subject of the disturbances at Ephesus, and the dangers to which he and the other teachers of the gospel had been exposed in that supersti-

tious city ; and for that calmness and quietude of mind with which this epistle was dictated, so different from that which appears in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. If it be objected that the apostle would hardly have intrusted such important powers to so young a person, Timothy being at this time probably no more than four- or five-and-twenty, that objection holds equally against the supposition that the apostle wrote the letter at the time when he left Ephesus in his way to Corinth, after the tumult of Demetrius. In fact, we know, from the tenor of the epistle, that Timothy was a very young man at the time when it was written ; and let it be remembered, that the officers which he was appointed to select, were not like bishops, presbyters, and deacons of modern times, but merely committees of respectable men to regulate the public meetings of the assembly, to instruct and exhort the members, or to manage its temporal concerns, and to provide for the poor. It was also very desirable, for the sake of order and regularity, that this arrangement should be made as speedily as possible without waiting for the apostle's return, which must necessarily be uncertain ; and Timothy, though young, must have been eminently qualified to take the lead in this business ; because the Ephesians, being new converts, were of course strangers to the customs of the churches, while Timothy, who had travelled with the apostle for several years, had seen the method in which the churches planted by him had been respectively organized. It should seem, therefore, that when the apostle left Ephesus, he fully expected to return soon ; but, knowing that his movements were not altogether in his own power, being sometimes impeded by his enemies, and at other times directed by express interposition of Christ himself, he appointed Timothy to superintend the affairs of the church during his absence ; and upon his arrival in Crète he wrote this epistle, to instruct his young associate how to act if he should himself be prevented from returning at the time proposed.

It adds considerably to the weight of the argument, that the Letters to Timothy and Titus have a great affinity to each other, not only in subject but in style ; nearly as great as that between the epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians. The Epistle to Titus being written less in detail than that to Timothy, being addressed to an older man. This circumstance greatly adds to the presumption of their having been written nearly at the same time, and upon similar occasions, which, upon this hypothesis, they were ; the Epistle to Timothy having been sent at the commencement, and that to Titus at the termination, of the apostle's mission to Crete.

One considerable objection obviously occurs to this hypothesis, which with some will be regarded as fatal. The apostle, at the beginning of his epistle, says, 1 Tim. i. 3, "I besought thee to remain at Ephesus when I *went into Macedonia*." And this is the reading in all copies and versions now extant. But that this letter could not have been written in the journey recorded Acts xx. when the apostle quitted Ephesus after the tumult of Demetrius, must, I think, be sufficiently apparent; and that the organization of the church at Ephesus would not have been left till after the apostle's release from his first imprisonment, and when Timothy was no longer a young man, is, I conceive, almost equally improbable. The difficulties in both cases are avoided by the proposed hypothesis; for the adoption of which we must either accept the reading of Hilary, "I besought thee to remain at Ephesus (*cum ires*) when you were about to set out for Macedonia;" or we must suppose some early corruption of the text, which it is not now in our power to rectify: this, however, is not without example in the sacred writings.

Upon the whole, it appears probable to me that the First Epistle to Timothy was written by the apostle from Crete, some time in A.D. 55.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY is one of those, the genuineness of which was never disputed by the ancient churches, and there seems no reason to call it in question now. It is a composition of great value, both as it establishes the divine authority of the Christian religion by the testimony which it bears to those extraordinary facts upon which its evidence rests; and as it illustrates the moral tendency and beneficial effect of the Christian doctrine in the piety, benevolence, and zeal of these its earliest professors, and most eminent and successful teachers. And this epistle is particularly useful, as it delineates the temper and character which may justly be expected in those who are appointed to the honourable office of teachers and ministers in the church.

It is plain, from the tenor of the epistle, that the apostle Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus with power to instruct and organize the church during his absence. And the design of the epistle is, to suggest salutary advice to the youthful evangelist to enable him to conduct himself with propriety and dignity, in a situation of great difficulty and delicacy.

CHAPTER FIRST. The apostle, after a suitable INTRODUCTION, warns the evangelist against false teachers, zealots for the law, and immoral in their

conduct; he expresses his gratitude for his own conversion to the Christian religion, and his call to the apostolic office; he exhorts Timothy to persevere in the same honourable profession, and not to apostatize from the truth like some whom he mentions, and whom he had found it necessary to exclude from Christian communion.

CHAPTER SECOND. The apostle requires that Christians should intercede for all men, and especially for those who are invested with civil authority, that peace and truth may every where prevail, ver. 1—8. He then enjoins upon the female sex modesty, reserve, and silent subjection, enforcing his injunctions by arguments drawn from the Mosaic account of the first human pair, ver. 9—15.

CHAPTER THIRD. The evangelist, having probably been directed to select proper persons to superintend the church, and to instruct its members, the apostle proceeds to enumerate the qualifications requisite for the honourable and successful discharge of the pastoral or episcopal office, ver. 1—7. He afterwards specifies the proper qualifications of deacons and their families, whose office in the church he represents as highly honourable and useful when performed with fidelity and discretion, ver. 8—13; and concludes this part of his subject with expressing a hope that he should soon return to his friend, whom he in the mean time encourages to zeal and activity, by a brief representation of those facts which constitute the basis of the Christian faith, ver. 14—16.

CHAPTER FOURTH. The apostle foretells the great apostasy, the distinguishing character of which would be to impose distinctions and mortifications inconsistent with the liberal spirit of the gospel, ver. 1—5. He exhorts the evangelist to avoid such useless distinctions, and all other trifling questions, and to insist wholly upon those important doctrines which were the foundation of Christian hope, and the best motive to virtuous practice; and for the sake of which they willingly suffered persecution, ver. 6—11; and he particularly recommends it to him to secure the respect of others by a strictly virtuous and exemplary deportment, by diligent application to the improvement of his mind, and by a faithful persevering discharge of the duties of his office, ver. 12—16.

CHAPTER FIFTH. The apostle directs his young friend, in what manner to administer reproof with the best effect, ver. 1, 2. He then details the qualifications of widows who were justly entitled to be entered upon the list of such as were to partake of the charitable distributions of the church, re-

minding him that these distributions could be only intended for those who were advanced in years, and who supported the most virtuous and honourable characters, ver. 3—16. He requires that the pastors of the society should have an equitable and liberal compensation for their labours, and that accusations against them should not be lightly received, ver. 17—20: and the apostle concludes this chapter with a solemn injunction upon the evangelist to observe his directions, to be impartial and deliberate in his proceedings, advising him to take due care of his health, and reminding him that the difference in human character required a correspondent difference in his treatment of different persons, ver. 21—25.

CHAPTER SIXTH. The apostle strictly requires servants, or slaves, to learn from the principles of Christianity to yield a steady and cheerful obedience to their masters, whether Christians or heathen, and animadverts severely upon those who taught that Christianity put an end to civil distinctions, ver. 1—5. He represents the promises of the gospel as the most valuable treasure, and the best antidote against covetousness, 6—10. He solemnly enjoins upon the evangelist to persevere in the practice of virtue, in the profession of Christianity, and in the faithful discharge of his public duty, as he will answer for himself at the appearance of Jesus Christ, ver. 11—16. He charges him to direct the opulent to a wise and virtuous use of their wealth, ver. 17—19; and having cautioned him against those who were desirous to corrupt the purity of the Christian faith with the vanities of a false philosophy, he concludes the epistle with his apostolical benediction, ver. 20, 21.

The Postscript to this epistle, which states that it was written from Laodicea, is unquestionably erroneous.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

SECTION I.

AFTER a suitable introduction, the apostle reminds the evangelist of the reason why he had left him at Ephesus to supply his place in his absence, and urges him to resist the attempts of those who would impose the observance of the ceremonial law. Ch. i. 1—11. Ch. I.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

THE apostle affectionately inscribes the epistle to the evangelist, ver. 1, 2.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the appointment of God our Saviour, and of Christ Jesus¹ our hope, to Timothy, my true son in the faith; favour, mercy, peace, from God our Father, and from Christ Jesus our Lord. Ver. 1. 2.

I who am an apostle of Christ, commissioned to teach his doctrine and to bear witness to his resurrection, being appointed to this honourable office by the will of God, who is our deliverer from the yoke of idol worship and of ceremonial institution, and by the immediate interposition of Jesus Christ, whose doctrine is the foundation of our immortal hope, who appeared to me

¹ *Of Christ Jesus.*] This is the true reading : vide Griesbach. The received text reads, "the Lord Jesus Christ."

Ch. I.
Ver. 2.

in the way to Damascus, and honoured me with a commission to teach the gospel,—I, Paul, address this epistle to my beloved Timothy, whom I have converted to the Christian doctrine, who follows my example with filial love and reverence, and for whom I feel the tenderest paternal regard; and to him I most sincerely wish an increasing participation of the blessings of the gospel, which are the free gift of divine mercy, and the possession of which comprehends every thing truly desirable both for this life and the next; to him may these blessings be communicated in the richest abundance from the mercy of God our benevolent Parent, and from Jesus our Master, who has been appointed by God as the medium of this his gracious dispensation to mankind.

2. He exhorts Timothy to continue at Ephesus, and to silence the false teachers, as he had given him in charge, ver. 3, 4.

3. *Continue*¹ *at Ephesus, as I intreated thee when I went into Macedonia*²,
4. *that thou mayest charge certain persons not to teach different doctrines, nor to pay attention to fables, and to endless genealogies*³, *which promote disputes, rather than that dispensation of God*⁴, *which is by faith.*

Being under the necessity of leaving Ephesus abruptly, and sooner than I intended, and before I had completed the settlement of the large society of Christians in that city and its vicinity, I intreated you to remain there while I proceeded to Macedonia in my way to Corinth. And I particularly requested that you would strictly charge certain persons who were disposed to set themselves up as teachers without being lawfully appointed to that office, or properly qualified for it, and who were inclined to impose upon their brethren

¹ *Continue.*] προσμειναι, in the imperative mood. Castellio, Knatchbull, Bowyer, Wakefield.

² *When I went into Macedonia.*] πορευομενος. So all copies and versions. One copy of Hilary reads *cum ires Macedoniam*, when you were going to Macedonia. *q. d.* When I set out from Ephesus you intended a voyage to Macedonia; at my intreaty you remained at Ephesus. At any rate this epistle could not have been written upon that journey to Macedonia, which is mentioned by Luke, Acts xx., and it is very improbable that it should have been deferred till after the apostle's release from his first imprisonment. A more probable period than either is assigned in the Introduction to this epistle, together with the arguments by which that hypothesis is supported: but upon the supposition there maintained, a mistake must have slipped into some very early copy in this sentence. See Griesbach, ed. 2.

³ *Endless genealogies.*] It is doubted whether the apostle means Jewish genealogies, or the Gnostic fiction of the genealogies of the Æons. Dr. Benson has assigned probable reasons for supposing the latter. Many Jewish philosophers were Gnostics. The apostle would hardly have called Jewish genealogies, fables. He himself boasted of his descent from Abraham.

⁴ *Dispensation:*] οἰκοδομiam. Such is the reading of the best authorities. The received text reads οἰκοδομiam, edification. See Griesbach.

the observance of the Jewish ritual, not to presume to teach a doctrine so different from that pure and spiritual Christianity which I had taught them; and particularly that they should not pay the least regard to the lying legends of Jewish rabbis, or to those intricate genealogies and unintelligible speculations which might supply arguments for perpetual wrangling, but could contribute nothing to the credit or the diffusion of that new and heavenly dispensation, which is appointed by God as the object of our Christian faith.

Ch. I.
Ver. 4.

3. The design of the apostle's instruction is to promote universal benevolence, while the crude doctrines of the false teachers only led to frivolous and unintelligible disputes, ver. 5—7.

Now the purpose of that charge⁵ is love, out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and undissembled faith.

5.

The true doctrine of Christ, which I have inculcated among them, produces love to God and man, together with a tranquil and happy state of mind, which originates in purity of heart, in the testimony of an approving conscience, and a practical faith in the gospel. And because it operates these beneficial effects, I urged you to charge those who usurp the office of teachers, at their peril to teach any thing inconsistent with it. And you well know that this instruction was far from being unnecessary.

From which some having swerved, have turned aside to vain talk; desiring to be teachers of the law, but understanding neither what they say, nor concerning what they so positively affirm.

6, 7.

Some weak and vain persons, losing sight of this main object of evangelical instruction, have taken upon them to teach many foolish and unnecessary things; imposing many rites and ceremonies upon the believers in Christianity, which are of no use in themselves, and which the author of our religion has not enjoined. Nor are these people in fact thoroughly acquainted with that ritual, the observance of which they are so ready to impose; but while they pretend to be teachers of the law, they betray gross ignorance both of its specific injunctions and of its grand design.

4. The law is useful as a restraint upon vice, but not as a ritual obligatory upon believers, ver. 8—11.

⁵ *Of that charge:] q. d.* which I exhorted you to give to the false teachers, ver. 3. Griesbach includes ver. 5—17 in a parenthesis.

Ch. I.
Ver. 8.

*Now we know that the law is excellent, if a man use it agreeably to its design*¹.

I am far from being an enemy to the Mosaic law, as my slanderers maliciously represent. I acknowledge it to be of divine original; and that at the time when it was delivered, and to the people for whom it was designed, it was of great use. And the moral part of it is still obligatory upon all mankind. But let not the ceremonial law, with the additional load of Pharisæic tradition, usurp the place of the gospel.

9. *Knowing this, that against a just person there is no law in force.*

Believers in the Christian religion are justified by faith without the works of the law; they are brought into a state of privilege and hope by the simple act of belief in Christ, and by making a public profession of their belief independently of a compliance with the Mosaic ritual. And if they live up to their profession and their future expectations, they are not obnoxious to that sentence which the moral law denounces upon all impenitent offenders. These are principles which we must settle in our own minds, when we take into consideration the present extent and obligation of the law of Moses.

10. *But laws are made for the lawless and the unruly, for the impious and the wicked, for the unholy and profane, for parricides and murderers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for man-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons;*
11. *and if there be any other thing contrary to that wholesome doctrine of the glorious gospel of the blessed*² *God, which has been committed to my trust.*

Laws are made to prevent crimes, by denouncing condign punishment upon those who are guilty: of these some are atrocious offences against society and the public peace, and demand the severest cognizance of the civil magistrate. Others are offences of a more private nature: violations of good morals, infringements upon that delicacy of character, which the gospel requires, that glorious gospel of which I have the honour to be an authorized preacher and an apostle, and which enjoins the strictest purity of heart and life, without which none can be admitted into the blissful presence of God.

¹ *Agreeably to its design.*] νομιμως, lawfully. "agreeably to the purpose for which the law was given, and without imposing the observance of its ceremonies on believers in the gospel." Newcome. Dr. Priestley observes, that "lest it should be imagined Paul meant to undervalue the law, he expressly declares that that was not his intention, and shows what was the proper end of the law with respect to the moral, which was the most important use of it; namely, to be a restraint upon vice and wickedness, several kinds of which he here enumerates."

² *Blessed God.*] μακάρις, blessed, perfect in happiness. Wakefield renders it *holy*, and refers to Hesychius.

These crimes, though highly blameable, cannot always be arraigned before an earthly tribunal; but they do not escape the notice of omniscience. And the sentence, which the moral law of God passes upon these offences, shall be as certainly executed in due season upon the obdurate and impenitent, as the punishment denounced upon crimes of the greatest notoriety, and the most horrible aggravation.

Ch. I.
Ver. 11.

SECTION II.

THE APOSTLE, after having expressed in the warmest terms his devout admiration and gratitude for his conversion to the faith, and his call to the apostolic office, renews the charge of fidelity to Timothy, and warns him of the danger of apostatizing from the faith. Ch. i. 12—20.

1. The apostle, having mentioned that he was intrusted to preach the gospel, takes occasion to express his great thankfulness for his conversion to the Christian faith, and his call to the apostolic office, ver. 12—14.

Now I return thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me ability³, that he accounted me faithful, having put me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I acted ignorantly in my state of unbelief. 12. 13.

I am intrusted to preach this glorious gospel; and truly, when I recollect this fact in all its circumstances, I am lost in admiration and gratitude for the great honour conferred upon one so undeserving of it. And first of all, I thank my Master Christ Jesus, who is the head of the church, and from whom I have received those gifts and powers by which I am qualified for the discharge of the apostolic office, that he should regard me, I will not say as worthy of this honourable station, but rather as one who would discharge the duties of the office with fidelity, zeal, and courage, and who would not by any mean and temporizing conduct betray the confidence reposed in me. It is truly wonderful that he should have vouchsafed thus to honour me, who before my conversion distinguished myself by the most malignant opposition to the Christian name; being a reviler of Jesus and of his doctrine,

³ *Who has given me ability.*] ἐνδυναμωσαντι με, *who granteth me strength.* Wakefield.—*q. d. who supplied me with miraculous powers, &c.* “by the co-operation of his spirit.” Newcome.

Ch. I.
Ver. 13.

a spiteful persecutor of his disciples, treating them in the most insolent and injurious manner. Yet, great as my offence was, it was forgiven; because my misconduct arose from an error of judgement, rather than from malevolence of heart. In my unhappy state of unbelief, I acted ignorantly, being seriously persuaded in my wretched, misguided conscience, that I ought to do all that I did against the doctrine and the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth.

14. *And the favour of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, together with¹ that faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.*

The mercy and goodness of Christ went far beyond the measure of my guilt and folly; and from a bigoted persecuting unbeliever, it transformed me into a humble, charitable, holy, zealous disciple, and preacher of the gospel. The power and grace of Christ wrought an immediate and total change in my views, my principles, my affections, and my conduct; and made me the reverse of all that I had been before.

2. The apostle represents the mercy manifested to him as an encouraging motive to faith and penitence, ver. 15, 16.

15. *It is a certain truth, and worthy of cordial reception², that Jesus Christ*
16. *came into the world to save sinners, of whom I have been³ the chief. Nevertheless, for this cause I obtained mercy; that in me, as chief⁴, Jesus Christ might display the utmost forbearance, as an example to those who should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life.*

There is no doctrine more true, more important, or more worthy of being cordially and universally received and professed, than this, That Jesus Christ came into the world to bring all mankind, whether the Jews who had forfeited their privileges, or the heathen who never possessed them, into a state of privilege and of hope, rescuing them from the bondage of the Mosaic law, and from the impure rites of idol worship, and introducing them into the light, the liberty, the peace, and privilege of the gospel state.

¹ *Together with:*] *q. d.* in producing that faith in Christ and love to him which then became the ruling principles in my breast. "Faith is opposed to St. Paul's former unbelief, and love to his former spirit of persecution." Newcome.

² *Of cordial reception.*] *πασης αποδοχης.* Raphelius observes, that *πας* is used for *summus.* Newcome. "all joyful acceptation." Wakefield.

³ *I have been.*] An instance of *ειμι* expressing past time.

⁴ *In me, as chief.*] *πρωτω.* Benson supposes the apostle means to say, he was the first blasphemer and persecutor who had been converted since the effusion of the spirit. But this, Macknight observes, is contrary to Acts ii. 33—41, vi. 7.

Of those who are thus benefited by the gospel, none was ever more unworthy than myself, who was not only an unbeliever, but a furious persecutor of the church; who had, therefore, forfeited all claims to mercy: yet my honoured Master singled me out as the object of his compassion; and this he did, not from any merit of my own, but that my example might be an encouragement to others, blind and furious as myself, to repent and reform, and embrace the gospel, in humble dependance upon that mercy which, having been extended to such an one as I was, will never be denied to any sincere penitent; and which will advance to a happy and immortal life every one who believes and obeys the gospel.

Ch. I.
Ver. 17.

3. The apostle, excited by the recollection of this distinguishing goodness, ascribes the glory of all to God, ver. 17.

Now to the ruler of the ages⁵, the incorruptible, the invisible, the only God⁶, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

17.

Mercy like this can never be sufficiently adored and praised. And though I acknowledge my great obligation to Jesus Christ, who was the immediate instrument of communicating these invaluable blessings, and conferring upon me these distinguishing honours, I do not forget that they are all ultimately to be traced to the free and infinite mercy of his God and our God. To Him therefore who is the author of all the dispensations of mercy to mankind, whether the patriarchal, the Mosaic, or this new dispensation under the Messiah, which comprehends all his rational offspring; to Him who ever lives to fulfill his purposes of mercy, and who is ever really, though invisibly, present with his faithful servants; to Him who alone is God, possessed of every perfection natural and moral, without an equal and without

⁵ *To the ruler of the ages.*] τῷ βασιλεὶ τῶν αἰώνων, “unto the king of the several ages or dispensations, viz. the age before the law, that under the law, and that under the Messiah, or the last age. Unto him that disposed these three grand dispensations, so as that one should make way for another, he here very pertinently ascribes praise. Lewis Capel informs us that this was one of the Jewish doxologies, *Let God be blessed for ever, who hath created this age and the age to come*; and that expressions like this are frequent in the Jewish liturgy.” Benson. See also Macknight. “Now unto the king of the ages, to God, uncorruptible, invisible,” &c. Wakefield. “Now to the king eternal, immortal, invisible.” Newcome.

The apostle had been expressing his gratitude to Christ, who had appeared in person to convert him to the faith, to invest him with the office of an apostle, to endue him with the necessary powers and qualifications, and who was with him to superintend and direct him in the whole course of his ministry. But he does not forget that Christ himself is no more than an instrument in the hands of God; whose supreme agency he here acknowledges, and to whom, as the Lord of all, the only God, he renders divine honours.

⁶ *The only God.*] The received text reads, “the only wise God;” but the word σοφῶ is wanting in the best manuscripts, and is dropped by Griesbach and Newcome.

Ch. I.
Ver. 17.

a rival; to Him be honour and praise through every dispensation, and to the end of time. Amen.

4. The apostle now resumes his charge to Timothy, whom he urges to fidelity and resolution, and warns against the dangers of apostasy, ver. 18—20.

18. *This charge¹ I commit to thee, O son Timothy, agreeably to prior solemn declarations² concerning thee, that according to them³ thou mayest maintain a good warfare.*

My dear Timothy, my beloved son in the faith, when I was about to engage you as my associate at Lystra, I inquired your character of the believers there, and was then assured by some of the most eminently gifted teachers of the church that I should find in you a zealous advocate of the pure gospel, and a determined opposer of the corrupt doctrine of the Jewish teachers, and they accompanied their commendations of your character with earnest exhortations to the same effect. I charge you, therefore, my beloved friend, to fulfill the expectations which have been raised concerning you: be strenuous in your opposition to those who would corrupt the gospel of Christ, and approve yourself a valiant champion of Christian truth.

19. *Retaining faith and a good conscience, which latter some having rejected, have also suffered shipwreck of their faith.*

There are two things which you must, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, strenuously retain. The first is, uncorrupted faith, the Christian faith in its original purity, unmixed with heathen philosophy on the one hand, and with Jewish fables and ceremonies on the other. The next is, a clear conscience,

¹ *This charge.*] παραγγελιαν, ver. 3. Timothy remained to give a charge, ver. 3; the design of this charge was to promote faith and love, ver. 5: the apostle now proceeds to give his charge in detail.

² *Prior solemn declarations.*] Mangey conjectures επι σε, concerning thee. See Bowyer.—Wakefield reads with the Æthiopic, επι με, concerning me; but gives it up as unintelligible. Προφητειας may express something which has been said before: meaning perhaps nothing more than either the high character given of Timothy by some eminent Christians at Derbe and Lystra, before the apostle admitted him as an associate (see Acts xvi. 2), or the solemn admonition, which had been addressed to him previously to entering upon his mission. Dr. Priestley, and many others, understand it of “some prophecy, pointing out Timothy as a proper person to be intrusted with the preaching of the gospel;” and adds, “it is evident from other circumstances that such a spirit of prophecy was then in the church.” It does not, however, appear necessary to suppose that there was any thing supernatural in the case. It is generally allowed that the prophets did not always speak from inspiration.

³ *According to them.*] εν αυταις i. e. in conformity to the testimonies borne to your character by the prophets or teachers of Derbe and Lystra. In this sense, says Dr. Benson, εν is used, Matt. vi. 7. Comp. 1 Tim. iv. 14.

a pure heart, and a virtuous life, without which faith will be of little use. And indeed there are some unhappy persons, who, having first polluted their consciences by their vices, and having lived in habitual contempt and neglect of the moral precepts of the gospel, have, as a natural consequence, rejected the belief of it altogether, and represented the whole as a fable and a fraud; or at least, while they have retained the profession of the Christian religion, they have subverted its grand design by teaching doctrines unfavourable to good morals as the essential doctrines of the Christian faith.

Ch. I.
Ver. 19.

Of which number are Hymenæus and Alexander⁴, whom I have delivered over to Satan, that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

20.

Of this misconduct there are two notorious instances at Ephesus, with which you are probably acquainted; namely, Hymenæus and Alexander. These were men of bad principles and immoral lives; and for that reason they rejected or corrupted the gospel, and gave me great trouble during my residence at Ephesus. But, to prevent further mischief, I thought fit to exclude them from the Christian community, and have consigned them to the society of those unbelievers and idolaters whose company they love, and whose works they practise. I shall be sincerely glad if this public stigma which has been fixed upon them, may be a means of bringing them to serious consideration, and of inducing them to repent of that malignant opposition which they now make to the doctrine of Christ, and to the preachers of the gospel.

⁴ *Hymenæus and Alexander.*] Alexander was a coppersmith, 2 Tim. iv. 14, once it seems a professor of the Christian religion; but being of an immoral character, he was by the apostle, together with Hymenæus, "delivered over to Satan," that is, *excommunicated*, see 1 Cor. v. 5. After which they apostatized from the Christian faith, denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, 2 Tim. ii. 17; and became, Alexander especially, bitter enemies of the apostle Paul. At the time of the riot at Ephesus, Alexander was urged on by the Jews, Acts xix. 33, probably to inflame the multitude still more against the apostle and his followers: but the populace, finding that he was a Jew, probably confounded him with the Christians, and would not give him a hearing. These men are mentioned again in the second epistle: Hymenæus as persisting in his mischievous errors and corrupting others, Alexander as the personal enemy of the apostle himself, and neither of them reformed by the discipline inflicted.

If, as many believe, the apostle delivered these men into the hands of the devil to cure them of blasphemy, he certainly sent them to a bad school. To suppose, that delivering to Satan was the miraculous infliction of disease, is perfectly gratuitous. The apostle disowned them, and excluded them from the Christian community.

SECTION III.

Ch. II. *THE APOSTLE enjoins general intercession, as an expression of benevolence acceptable to God, who wills that all mankind, without distinction, should participate in the blessings of the gospel. Ch. ii. 1—7.*

1. The apostle enjoins intercession for all mankind, and especially for magistrates and men in exalted stations, as an acceptable expression of universal good-will. Ch. ii. 1—4.

Ver. 1. *I exhort, therefore, in the first place, that supplications¹, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings, be made² for all men³.*

I know but too well the narrow spirit which prevails among my countrymen, who regard themselves as the favourites of heaven, and look upon the Gentile world with contempt and abhorrence, as more deserving of anathemas than benedictions. I fear lest the same spirit should be infused by false teachers into the converts to the Christian faith. But let it be deeply impressed upon the mind of every disciple of Christ, that the religion of Jesus is a law of kindness and universal good-will; and therefore I strictly charge you, that whenever the believers at Ephesus assemble together for religious worship, prayers should be offered up for all mankind, deprecations of impending calamities, and petitions for necessary blessings; also that thanksgivings should be rendered to God for his great goodness to all his reasonable creatures.

2. *For kings, and all who are in high stations, that we⁴ may lead a peaceable and quiet life in all piety and virtue.*

¹ *Supplications.*] “By *δεησεις* I understand petitions for a supply of our wants; by *προσευχας*, vows to the Almighty in return; by *εντευξεις*, meditations, and that intercourse which passes between God and our own souls.” Bishop Barrington, Bowyer. “*δεησεις*, deprecations; *προσευχας*, prayers for good things; *εντευξεις*, intercessions; *ευχαριστιας*, thanksgivings. I do not apprehend,” saith Benson, “that the apostle was very solicitous nicely to distinguish between supplications, prayers, and intercessions, but used them all to intimate, that he would not only have them praise God, but put up all sorts of petitions for all men, by what name soever these petitions were usually called.”

² *Be made.*] *ποιεσθαι*. Bishop Bull understood this of a direction to compose liturgies for the church at Ephesus: “an instance of prejudice which,” Dr. Doddridge says, “almost made him weep.”

³ *All men.*] This exhortation is almost universally understood to refer to the narrow-mindedness of the Jews; who in the first captivity were taught to pray for those in whose land they were captives, see Ezra vi. 10; but under the Romans were unwilling to pray for their oppressors, and constantly stirring up sedition.

⁴ *That we may lead.*] Mr. Wakefield, upon the authority of the Arabic, renders it, “that

The enemies of the gospel will be desirous of representing you as seditious and disloyal; they will intentionally confound you with those zealots of the law, whose obstinacy in refusing to pray for their heathen governors gives great and just offence. But let the Christians at Ephesus be exhorted to pray for the emperor, and for all subordinate civil authorities, whose office it is to preserve the public peace. And let them recommend both their persons and their government to the divine protection and blessing, that so they may give no just occasion of offence, and that, by their dutiful submission to the civil power, they may obtain that protection from it which will ensure peace and security, and will enable them to pass their lives in the exercise of piety and the practice of virtue, so as to command universal respect.

Ch. II.
Ver. 2.

For this is right and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who willeth that all men should be saved⁵, and come to the acknowledgement of the truth.

3, 4.

This spirit of pious philanthropy is honourable to the Christian religion; and it is highly pleasing to God, who has by his great mercy in the gospel delivered us from the bondage of idolatry and vice, and from the narrow spirit of the Jewish œconomy: who is also the common parent of the whole human race; whose good pleasure it is, that the gospel should be published to all mankind without distinction, and that the great deliverance we have experienced should be extended to every individual, of every nation, who will accept of the gracious offers of salvation; who has also commissioned the apostles and other teachers of the Christian doctrine, to make the gospel known through the whole habitable world, that all may be instructed in its truth, and participate in its blessings.

2. The apostle, in pursuance of this argument, asserts the universal importance of the Christian doctrine, which he was specially appointed to preach to the Gentiles, ver. 5—7.

they may go through a quiet and peaceful life with all veneration and respect. This authority is hardly sufficient for changing the received text, which admits of so good and pertinent a sense. Beza proposes to omit the point at οὐτως. q. d. all placed in authority for this end, that we may lead a peaceable life. See Bowyer.

⁵ *Who willeth that all men should be saved.*] This expression is explained by the succeeding clause, that “they should come to the acknowledgement of the truth:” to be *saved*, therefore, is to become professors of the gospel, by which they were saved from idolatry on the one hand and Judaism on the other. It has no reference to the happiness of a future life any further than the profession of the gospel might be the means of virtue. See Newcome. Dr. Macknight well explains it, “who commands all men to be saved from heathenish ignorance and Jewish prejudices.” When it is said that *God wills they should be saved*, the meaning is, that it is his pleasure that the gospel should be preached to all, without distinction of Jew or Gentile.

Ch. II. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man*
Ver. 5. *Christ Jesus*¹.

There is no reason why one nation or class of men should regard themselves as entitled to greater privileges than another; for there is one God, the benevolent and impartial parent of all mankind, the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and equally disposed to promote the happiness of all his creatures. And to manifest his love to all men equally, of whatever nation or country, he has deputed one person only as the chief messenger of his will. He has not sent into the world one prophet to the Jews and another to the heathen: much less has he commissioned an angel or celestial spirit to communicate his will to one people, and a frail human being to teach another: but he has appointed his faithful servant Jesus Christ, a man like ourselves, subject to all the innocent weaknesses and infirmities of human nature, but amply qualified for the discharge of the high commission with which he is intrusted, to be the instructor of all men, whether Jews or heathen, and the the great medium of divine communication.

6. *Who gave himself a ransom*² *for all men, the testimony*³ *reserved for its proper time.*

It was necessary for the accomplishment of the purposes of divine providence, that the distinguished person who was appointed to be the medium of divine communication with all mankind, as Moses was with the Jewish

¹ *The man Christ Jesus.*] Not the God-man, nor any the least intimation that he was any thing more than a man. A mediator is one who is the medium of divine communication, as Moses was to the Israelites: it does not at all imply the notion of atonement or propitiation. "Had the apostle," saith Dr. Priestley, "thought him to be a being of a higher nature than that of man, it cannot be supposed but that in this place more especially, he would have denominated him by that higher rank, whatever it was; and especially if he had conceived him to be so great a being as the Maker of man and all things."

² *A ransom for all.*] ἀντιλυτρον. Estius saith, that this was a word used when life was given for life. It signifies in general, the means of deliverance. Mr. Wakefield renders it *deliverance*. Benson understands ἀντιλυτρον as λυτρον, the price put down for the ransom of a captive. One great mistake on this subject is, that the apostle is understood to speak of deliverance from sin and its punishment, when he only means, deliverance from the yoke of heathenism and the ceremonial law.

³ *The testimony.*] μαρτυριον. I adopt Benson's interpretation: "an eminent and stedfast witness of the truth in the age in which it was appointed that he should live and die." Benson also has some good remarks upon the voluntary submission of Christ to suffering and death.

The Alexandrine MS. wants το μαρτυριον. q. d. "who gave himself a ransom at the proper time." The Clermont and other copies read οὐ το κ. τ. λ. q. d. "the testimony to which was given at the proper time." One copy reads το μυστηριον, the mystery, i. e. the call of the Gentiles; which Beza and Wakefield prefer, but decline to adopt against the authority of all the versions. Castalio and Bengelius connect this clause with the succeeding: q. d. "a doctrine to be borne witness to in due season, of which I am appointed a preacher." Bowyer, Griesbach.

nation, should suffer a public death ; and to this catastrophe Jesus of Nazareth, who was anointed and set apart for this honourable office, voluntarily and cheerfully submitted. And this sacrifice which he made of his life for the benefit of all mankind, may be called a ransom, a price of redemption from bondage, a means of deliverance to the heathen from the thralldom of idolatry and vice, and to the Jew from the yoke of the law ; for by this event the Jewish covenant was abrogated, and the new and universal dispensation of grace and mercy was introduced. The death of Jesus, the mediator, may also be regarded as a signal testimony to the truth of his doctrine, and to the divinity of his mission. And this important event took place at the season appointed in the counsels of infinite wisdom, a time which was upon the whole the fittest and the best ; after it had been made sufficiently apparent, that the light of nature and the speculations of philosophy were not of themselves capable of enlightening and reforming the world.

Ch. II.
Ver. 6.

Of which doctrine⁴ I have been appointed a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth⁵, I speak not falsely,) an instructor of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

7.

I again repeat it in justification of my own conduct, and as a public warrant to you, Timothy, in following my directions at Ephesus, and in teaching that doctrine which you have learned from me, that of this gracious dispensation, thus attested and ratified by the death of Jesus Christ, I have the honour to be constituted by him a teacher and an apostle, a publisher of the doctrine which he first taught, and a witness of his resurrection from the state of death. And what is still more astonishing, and to a prejudiced and narrow-minded Jew may appear wholly incredible, which nevertheless I solemnly aver to be a real and a serious truth, I am authorized and required by Christ, who is my master, and the director of my missionary labours, to be an instructor of the Gentiles in the purity and simplicity of that faith,

⁴ *Of which doctrine.*] εἰς ὃ, as concerning. Newcome ; who remarks, that the latter clause in ver. 6, and the beginning of ver. 7, may be rendered, “for a testimony to the world at the proper season : i. e. when the fullness of time came. For which testimony I have been appointed, &c.”

⁵ *I speak the truth.*] The received text adds, “in Christ :” these words are wanting in the Alexandrine, Clermont, and other copies, and in the Syriac, Vulgate, and other versions, and are dropped by Griesbach, Newcome, and Wakefield. Dr. Owen says, “As they occur Rom. ix. 1. without any mark of reprobation, I see no reason why they should be thought commensurative here.” Bowyer. Nor would they be rejected here, if they were supported by equal authority.

Ch. II.
Ver. 7.

the profession of which will introduce them into a state of privilege and hope, and a practical regard to which will ensure their ultimate and everlasting felicity.

SECTION IV.

THE APOSTLE requires that the public offices of worship should be conducted by men only, forbidding women to officiate in public, and enjoining upon them at all times to observe that decorum of dress and behaviour, which becomes the modesty and delicacy of the sex. Ch. ii. 8—15.

1. The apostle requires that the public offices of religion should in all places be conducted by men, ver. 8.

8. *I direct therefore that the men pray¹ in every place², lifting up holy hands³, without wrath or disputing⁴.*

Being appointed by Jesus Christ an apostle in his church, with full powers to teach his doctrine, and to regulate its external concerns, and having exhibited to the church at Ephesus ample evidence of this authority thus intrusted to me, I now proceed to mention some regulations, which, for the sake of decency, good order and general edification, I require to be observed by the churches, and which in my absence I delegate to you full authority to carry into effect. And in particular I enjoin, that the religious services of the Christian society shall be conducted by the men only, who are better qualified to speak in mixed assemblies than persons of the other sex. Let this rule be universally observed; and let public prayers be offered up to God, wherever it may be convenient to a society of believing worshipers to assemble. Under the Christian dispensation there is no distinction of places any more than of times; and prayers offered up from the meanest edifice, or from the open fields, are as acceptable to God as if they were presented in

¹ *That the men pray.*] A direction that men only should conduct public devotion. See Benson.

² *In every place.*] An allusion to the Jews; who limited the presence of God to the temple and the synagogue. Vide Benson.

³ *Holy hands.*] An allusion to the custom of washing hands before prayer.

⁴ *Without wrath or disputing.*] “*q. d.* without resentment of Christians to persecutors; of Jews and Judaizers to Gentiles.” Benson. “*Without disputings* about the admission of Gentiles into the church, and the universal obligation of the law, or about Jewish fables and genealogies.” Vide Benson and Newcome.

the synagogue, the temple, or any other consecrated edifice, however splendid. One qualification is indispensable: namely, that the hands which are held up to God should not only be externally but morally pure; and that the heart from which these prayers proceed should be free from all malevolent passions, and especially from religious bigotry; from that angry spirit, which is too often generated and fomented by disputes concerning times, and places, and modes of worship; and from that rancour which those who entertain different opinions upon these subjects are too ready to indulge with respect to each other.

Ch. II.
Ver. 8.

2. The apostle recommends to the women simplicity and decorum in dress, and forbids them to assume the office of public teachers, ver. 9—12.

I likewise require that the women should adorn themselves with decent apparel⁵, with modesty and discretion. Not so much⁶ with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, as with good works, which becometh women professing reverence for God⁷.

9.

10.

As some of the new converts are persons of rank and fortune, I forbid not women of their quality and station from wearing that apparel which is usual and decorous. Let them, if they please, upon proper occasions, assume the ornaments of dress; but let them never exceed the limits of modesty and discretion, nor let them affect splendour in their attire when they assemble with their fellow Christians for the worship of God. Above all things let them remember, that the most precious ornaments of the female sex, and especially of those who, having renounced idolatry, profess to be worshipers of the true God, and disciples of Jesus Christ, consist in acts of charity and beneficence. The habit of doing good is a glorious robe, which well becomes

⁵ *Decent apparel.*] "suitable in point of decorum, considering their station in life, and what becomes them as Christians." Newcome.

⁶ *Not so much.*] Literally, "not with braided hair (or curls), &c. but with good works." Archbishop Newcome well explains the text, "not so much with, &c. and not only with, &c. See John vi. 27; Eph. vi. 12." It is a well known Hebrew form of expressing the comparative degree. The apostle could not mean to forbid Christian women to dress in a manner becoming their rank and station in life; or to represent curling the hair or ornaments of gold and jewellery as in themselves immoral. Christianity lays no stress upon things indifferent: what the apostle forbids is foolish vanity in dress, expense beyond what persons can really or conveniently afford, and which will cramp their benevolence; an affectation of finery which is inconsistent with simplicity and unbecoming their station in life; and in a word, a solicitous attention to external appearance, to the neglect of piety, charity, and good works.

⁷ *Professing reverence,*] or, worship of God; i. e. the true God, distinct from idols. See Newcome and Wakefield.

Ch. II. persons of every age and condition of life, and especially those who are blest
Ver. 10. with affluence. It will never tarnish, and never wear out.

11, 12. *Let the woman receive instruction in silence¹ with entire submission. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but require her² to remain in silence.*

It does not agree with the delicacy of the female sex to put themselves forward as public teachers. Though some are inclined to encourage this practice, it is what I disapprove, and in virtue of my apostolic authority I expressly forbid. Let the women confine themselves to the duties of their proper sphere, and let them not intrude into the province of the men, who by the greater vigour of their constitution, and the firmer tone of their organs, are better qualified for public speaking. Let the women therefore attend as hearers in respectful silence; and if they desire further information, let them ask in private of those who are able and willing to communicate instruction.

3. The apostle enforces the injunction by arguments borrowed from the Mosaic account of the creation and fall of man, and concludes the subject with a promise of blessings to the virtuous, ver. 13—15.

13. *For Adam was first formed, and Eve afterwards.*

The book of Genesis informs us that Eve was made for Adam, and not Adam for Eve; and therefore the woman should acknowledge the superiority of the man.

14. *Also Adam was not seduced, but the woman being seduced was guilty of transgression³.*

The understanding of Eve was easily imposed upon by the smooth and subtle discourse of the serpent, and she was therefore persuaded to eat the forbidden fruit. But Adam fell in consequence of his attachment to Eve, not because his understanding was deluded. The woman therefore should be in subjection to the man, as possessing a superior intellect, and being more capable of discerning between right and wrong⁴.

¹ *In silence.*] “in the church. 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.” Newcome.

² *But require her.*] See a similar construction ch. iv. 3.

³ *Was guilty of transgression.*] So Newcome. Wakefield gives a different version: “Adam was not deceived, but became a transgressor through the error of the woman.”

⁴ *Between right and wrong.*] Such is the nature of the apostle’s argument; which, to say the truth, is of no great weight, and will hardly bear him out in his conclusions, any further than as it was an address to the professed principles of those who were zealots for the Mosaic ritual. That it is proper for men to take the lead in the public services of Christian assem-

The apostle concludes this head of discourse with the promise of blessing Ch. II.
to the pious and obedient.

*Nevertheless⁵, she shall be preserved in child-bearing, if they continue⁶ Ver. 15.
in faith and love and holiness with soberness of mind.*

Though the inferiority of the woman is thus established, and though she was condemned to a severe penalty in consequence of the Fall, yet she shall be in some measure redeemed from the curse; and the pains and sorrows of childbirth, if not removed, shall at least be mitigated to those who have learned to bear them with a christian spirit, and who adorn their profession by the practice of christian virtue.

blies is obviously just, and will be generally allowed. And the apostle had undoubted authority to enjoin a decorous silence upon the female sex. It is likewise sufficiently evident that it is equally indecorous for the woman to usurp authority over the man in the affairs which properly fall within his department. But that degrading subjection of the female sex which was common in the East, and which the apostle seems to favour, is neither consistent with wisdom, with justice, nor with the liberal spirit of modern times. And if the authenticity, and the literal interpretation of what is commonly called the Mosaic account of the creation, and the fall of man, should be admitted, which are very problematical, the apostle's argument would still be very precarious. If the priority of Adam's creation proves his superiority to Eve, the priority of the creation of brutes would prove their superiority to Adam. And if Adam knowingly violated the command of God, his folly was surely far greater than that of Eve, who had been imposed upon by the serpent.

⁵ *Nevertheless, &c.*] An extremely difficult text. Newcome suspects *της τεκνογονίας* to be an interpolation, or marginal reading crept into the text; but he owns the supposition is unsupported by authority. The sense given in the paraphrase is the most common, and upon the whole the most probable. It is adopted by Locke, Benson, and Newcome. Locke, on Rom. vii. 5, cites several texts in which *δια* has the force of *in*, or *during*. viz. Rom. iv. 11; 2 Cor. v. 10; Eph. iii. 6. So the Greeks say, *δι' ἡμέρας* during the day, *δια νυκτός* during the night.—It is not indeed literally true, that Christian females are relieved from the sufferings and dangers of child-bearing: but the practice of Christian virtue is the best preparative for suffering, and affords the best support under it. Rosenmuller renders the verse: "*Consequetur autem salutem cum procreatis liberis, si permanserint in fide, et amore, et sanctitate vitæ cum temperantia*;" she shall be saved with her children, if they continue in faith and love, &c. He observes, the Syriac renders *τεκνογονία*, children; that this translation preserves the construction; and that *δια* with a genitive, as is well known, is sometimes put for *συν*, with. See Rom. ii. 27. iv. 11. q. d. The woman and her children shall be saved, if they are well educated and practise virtue. Mr. Wakefield's translation is similar to that of Rosenmuller: "notwithstanding, their offspring will be saved, if they continue in faith, and love, and sanctity with sobermindedness." Some understand the passage as referring to Christ, the promised seed. But this is an arbitrary interpretation.

⁶ *If they continue.*] "See a like change of number Psalm cxxvii. 5." Newcome.

SECTION V.

Ch. III. *THE APOSTLE, to assist Timothy in the choice of proper persons for ecclesiastical offices, describes the qualifications requisite in those who are appointed to officiate as bishops or superintendants in the church.* Ch. iii. ver. 1—7.

1. He represents the episcopal office as very honourable, ver. 1.

Ver. 1. *This is a true observation¹, If any man be earnestly desirous² of the episcopal office, he desireth an honourable employment.*

Many are eager to be appointed bishops or superintendants in the church; some may perhaps be prompted by a mean ambition of superiority and fancied pre-eminence; some may not be sufficiently apprized of the importance of the office, of the various duties that are attached to it, or of the many qualifications requisite to the faithful, honourable and successful discharge of it; while some, I doubt not, have just views, and are influenced by the best motives. They do not look up to it as to an office of ease, of emolument, or of power, but as a post of labour, of danger, and of usefulness. But whatever be the views and motives of the respective candidates, it is a certain fact, that he who is ambitious of the episcopal office is ambitious of a very honourable and very important employment; an employment, which, in the present critical situation of the church at Ephesus, will require consummate prudence and sagacity, will demand constant vigilance and activity, will expose its possessors to imminent perils, but which, if faithfully and wisely discharged, will be productive of great honour to himself and advantage to the church. It will be his business, in connexion with his colleagues and fellow-labourers, to instruct the ignorant, to preserve the doctrine of the church pure and uncorrupted, to resist the encroachments of the false teachers, to maintain good order and discipline, to warn the unruly, to dismiss from the Christian community those who cannot otherwise be reclaimed,

¹ *This is a true observation.*] Literally, "This is a faithful or credible saying." This clause is added to the end of the preceding chapter by Markland and Wakefield. See Bowyer.

² *Earnestly desirous.*] *ορεγεται*. Vide Macknight. Dr. Priestley strongly recommends reviving the office of elders in dissenting churches, as the only proper way to support discipline.

to keep the church in unity, holiness and peace, to preclude every just occasion of offence to unbelievers, and to maintain a fair and honourable reputation. Ch. III.
Ver. 1.

2. Having thus stated the importance of the office, he proceeds to describe the qualifications requisite for the honourable and successful discharge of it, ver. 2—7.

*A bishop then must be blameless*³,—As the law required that priests should be free from natural blemishes, the gospel requires that its ministers should be exempt from moral stains, and that their characters should be pure and without reproach; 2.

*the husband of one wife*⁴,—one who is not guilty of polygamy, and who has not, from insufficient reasons, divorced one woman and married another: for these practices, though allowed among the heathen, and tolerated by the Jews, are inconsistent with the superior purity and strictness of the Christian law;

*vigilant*⁵,—guarding against the introduction of error and vice;

*self-governed*⁶,—with a mind well regulated, and free from the domineering influence of turbulent and unruly passions;

*decent*⁷—in his outward behaviour, so as not only to avoid giving offence, but to attract esteem and respect by a grave and becoming deportment;

*hospitable*⁸—to strangers, and particularly to those who are employed as

³ *Blameless.*] ἀνεπιληπτον. An allusion to the law of the priesthood. Vide Benson. The directions here are similar to those given to Titus, ch. i. 5, &c. No doubt, therefore, Timothy was left at Ephesus with the same view as Titus was left in Crete. The apostle had not yet resided at Ephesus long enough to organize the church completely to his mind:—a presumption that the epistle was written before the apostle had completed his long three years residence at Ephesus; during which he must have had ample time to organize the Ephesian church. It also furnishes a further presumption, that the letters to Timothy and Titus were written at no great distance of time from each other. These circumstances countenance the supposition that Paul visited Crete from Ephesus, and that the epistle to Timothy was dated from Crete. That the elders and bishops of Ephesus were the same, is evident from Acts xx. 17—28.

⁴ *The husband of one wife.*] See Benson, Newcome, Doddridge. Some infer from hence, that none but a married man might be a bishop; others, that a Christian minister may not marry a second wife. But the interpretation in the commentary seems to be the most rational, and is most generally adopted. How inconsistent is this direction of the apostle with the Popish doctrine of the celibacy of the priests!

⁵ *Vigilant.*] νηφαλιον might be rendered *sober* or *temperate*; but that is mentioned in the next verse. See Macknight and Wakefield.

⁶ *Self-governed.*] σωφρονα, sanæ mentis. “whose mind is well regulated; one who governs his passions.” Macknight.

⁷ *Decent.*] κοσμιον, of comely behaviour. “The former respects the inward man, this the outward.” Macknight.

Ch. III.
Ver. 2.

missionaries to propagate the gospel, accommodating them with every thing necessary for their subsistence and comfort, while they remain with him, and supplying them with whatever may be requisite to promote the design of their mission when they depart. The bishop must also be

ready to teach,—being himself well-instructed in the genuine doctrine of the Christian religion; impressed with a strong desire to communicate instruction even to those who are most ignorant, or in the meanest station: and likewise possessing a facility of conveying his ideas in a clear, intelligible and impressive manner;

3. *not addicted to wine, not a striker*¹;—for these vices are absolutely inconsistent with the meek and holy spirit of the gospel, and are particularly disgusting in the teachers of its sublime doctrine:

but mild, not contentious, not covetous;—not ready to take offence, nor delighting in angry quarrels, but of a peaceable and gentle temper; breathing the spirit of that gospel which he teaches, which contains the joyful message of peace and good-will to men. Nor is it fit that a superintendant of the church should be of an avaricious spirit, eagerly grasping after wealth, and unwilling to employ it to the purposes of benevolence and hospitality;

4. *one who governs his own family well, keeping his children in subjection with all gravity.*

A bishop who is to sustain the rank of a father in the church, must first show that he knows how to exercise with discretion the authority of a father at home. He must govern his own family well, with a prudent mixture of gentleness and resolution, so as to secure the reverence and esteem of his household. And in particular, if he have children, he must have trained them up to habits of good order and respectful obedience.

5. *For if a man know not how to govern his own family, how can he take care of the church of God?*

⁸ *Hospitable.*] “Hospitality was more necessary when there were no public houses.” Newcome, Macknight, and Benson.

¹ *Not a striker.*] The word *αἰσχροκερδῆς*, *not greedy of filthy lucre*, which follows in the received text, is omitted in the best manuscripts, and by Griesbach. Dr. Priestley observes, “that it may seem extraordinary that any mention should be made of such vices as these; and particularly as disqualifications for the office of bishop. It shows that the reform of conduct was the work of time; these facts are inconsistent with the idea of any sudden or miraculous change being wrought in the mind. Men first change their opinion and profession upon proper evidence; and better principles would, when they had time to operate, produce a proper change in heart and life.”

If a person, for want of prudence and a proper dignity of character, cannot keep his own family in order; if his children are insolent or disobedient, rude and ungovernable; if he fails in the regulation of that small society, over which his authority is almost absolute, how can it be reasonably expected that he will superintend with discretion the concerns of the church, or maintain order and discipline in a society so much larger, where the tempers and dispositions of the members are so much more various and unmanageable, which is consequently so much more difficult to be governed, and where his authority will be so much less?

Ch. III.
Ver. 5.

Not one newly converted, lest, being elated, he fall under the condemnation of the accuser².

6.

It would be improper to choose a new convert to exercise an office of high trust and authority in the church, whatever his rank in life, or whatever his qualifications and talents may be; for, to say nothing of the improbability of his being properly instructed in the Christian faith, and of the impropriety of elevating him above other Christians of greater knowledge and experience, it can hardly be doubted that an elevation so sudden and unexpected would inspire too high an opinion of himself, and prompt him to some indiscretion in his language or his conduct; of which the vigilant and malicious enemies of Christianity would gladly avail themselves to his personal disadvantage, and to that of the church over which he might be chosen to preside.

He must likewise support an honourable character among those who are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the accuser.

7.

A bishop or superintendant of the church must be a person who has always maintained a good character in the world, who has never been guilty of any notorious vices or indiscretions; so that he may be held in estimation even among unbelievers, and that no one may have any ground to cast reproach upon him. Otherwise, if by any flagrant instance of misconduct he has injured his character, he will never be able to discharge his duty with true satisfaction of mind; his instructions, admonitions and reproofs, will want their due weight and influence; and the enemies of Christianity will either insidiously endeavour to seduce him from the faith, and to draw him again into vice and disgrace; or, by exaggerated reports, and vile insinua-

² *The accuser.*] διαβολον. The enemies of Christianity, who were ready to propagate reports to the disadvantage of Christians and of the gospel, and to invent calumnies. There is no reason to think that the devil is at all alluded to by the apostle.

Ch. III.
Ver. 7.

tions, they will endeavour to blast his character, to injure his usefulness, and to bring the society over which he presides into contempt. So that nothing can be more essential to the usefulness of a superintendant, or a bishop of the church, and to the interest of the community over which he presides, than a clear conscience and an honourable character.

SECTION VI.

THE APOSTLE describes the characters and qualifications requisite in those who were candidates for the offices of deacons or deaconesses. Ch. iii. 8—15.

1. The apostle specifies the qualifications of those who were fit to be appointed to the office of deacons, ver. 8—10.

8. *In like manner the deacons must be grave, not double-tongued¹, not addicted to much wine, not greedy of dishonourable gain.*

As the deacons are chosen to superintend the secular affairs of the church, and occasionally to assist in the office of Christian instruction, great attention should be paid to the characters of those who are appointed to this honourable station.

Like the bishops or elders, they should be men of grave and respectable characters, who are not likely, by any levity of conduct, to expose themselves or their office, their doctrine, or the society whose concerns they are appointed to manage, to contempt. They must also be men of simplicity and sincerity, consistent in their language, not applauding men to their faces and condemning them when absent, not teaching one doctrine at one time and another at another, in order to gratify prejudice, to promote their interest, or to gain applause. Neither must they be addicted to intemperance, that degrading vice, nor to mean and dishonourable gain: they must not be of a covetous and mercenary spirit, lest, being intrusted with the funds of the society, they should apply to their own use what is intended for the decent support of the officers of the church or the relief of the poor.

¹ Not double-tongued.] διλογες, "prone to hollowness and deceit." Newcome.

*Retaining the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience*².

Ch. III.
Ver. 9.

The deacons ought to be well-instructed in the whole doctrine of Christ, but especially in that very interesting discovery which was to former ages an unknown mystery, but which is now made manifest, to the no small discontent and confusion of narrow-minded Jews, but to the unspeakable delight and gratitude of the Gentile believers, that the heathen who is converted to the faith of Christ, shall be admitted to equal rights with the believing Jew, though he may not submit to the bondage of the law. And this great principle he must hold with a clear conscience: he must not only believe, but profess this important article of the Christian faith; and he must not, in order to avoid the displeasure of Judaizing bigots, suppress the truth of the gospel, and sacrifice the liberty of the Gentile church: nor must he, in the distribution of the donations of the church, show any partiality to the Hebrew above the Gentile convert.

*And let these also be first proved, and then, if irreproachable*³, *let them take the office of deacon.*

10.

As it is improper to elect a new convert to the office of a bishop or superintendant of the church, it is also inexpedient to appoint such an one to the office of a deacon. Let such officers be chosen from among believers of knowledge and experience who are of considerable standing in the church, men of tried integrity, and whose character is an ornament to their profession. And being publicly nominated, if no objection be alleged against them, and if they appear to be generally approved, let them then assume and exercise the office.

2. The apostle gives similar directions with respect to the qualifications of women who were appointed to the offices of deaconesses, ver. 11.

² *With a pure conscience.*] Dr. Benson thinks that there is an allusion here to the case of Hymenæus and Alexander, ch. i. Dr. Macknight observes, that "the apostle's direction implies, that he should be both sound in the faith and conscientious in maintaining it." The *mystery of the faith* was the call of the gentiles. A man invited to be a deacon ought both to be convinced of the truth of this doctrine, and courageous in avowing it; and who would, therefore, be impartial in the distribution of the donations of the church, Acts vi. See Benson.

³ *Irreproachable.*] "ανεγκλητοι, qui non in jus vocari potest propter scelus manifestum." Schleusner. q. d. against whom, when proposed, no objection can be made. Dr. Macknight observes, that "it was a custom in the church, which obtained probably from the apostolic age, to publish the names of those who were intended for ecclesiastical functions, that if any one had aught to accuse them of, they might show it:" to this custom he supposes an allusion here.

Ch. III.
Ver. 11.

In like manner the women¹ ought to be grave, not slanderers², temperate, faithful in all things.

The same directions which I have given concerning the qualifications of a deacon, I repeat with respect to those women, whom, in the present circumstances of the church, it is expedient to appoint to the office of deaconess: and whose duty it is to visit and instruct those of their own sex, to attend the sick, to relieve the poor, and to entertain strangers. Let the women, who may be selected for this useful office, be grave and decent in their deportment, and free from all unbecoming levity in their behaviour. Let them not be too severe in animadverting upon the failings of others; and, above all things, let them abstain from false and malicious accusations. Let them beware of excess, and vigilantly guard against the odious habit of intemperance. And as they are intrusted with the public purse for the relief of the poor, the sick, and the stranger, let them discharge this duty with the strictest fidelity, and upon no consideration let them divert the contributions of the church to purposes different from those for which they were designed.

3. He directs that deacons should be men who govern their own families with discretion, and that, by meritorious exertions in inferior offices, they should qualify themselves for more honourable stations, ver. 12, 13.

- 12.] *Let the deacons be husbands of one wife only, ruling their children and*
13. *their own families well. For they who have discharged the office of a deacon well, acquire for themselves an honourable rank³, and great freedom of speech⁴ in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

¹ *The women.*] The women here mentioned are commonly supposed to be the wives of the deacons; but there is no reason to believe that the apostle would give directions concerning them any more than about the wives of the bishops. It is certain from Rom. xvi. that women exercised the office of deaconesses to those of their own sex in the primitive church, and to these probably the apostle alludes in this place. This was the opinion of Chrysostom and most of the ancient writers, and is well supported by Benson and Macknight. It is also adopted by Newcome. Macknight thinks that *πρεσβυτιδες*, Tit. ii. 3, 4, were *female elders* appointed to instruct the young of their own sex; 1 Tim. v. 2, 9, 10, the same persons are called *widows*. He has a pertinent quotation from Clement of Alexandria, to prove that these female teachers were so called; and indeed it is probable that they were chosen from the class of widows.

² *Not slanderers.*] *διαβολες*. “*false accusers*. See ver. 6, and Ainsworth on Lev. xix. 16, xxi. 7. They were not to slander any body; and especially not to blast the characters of the poor, and so cut them off from the charitable relief of the Christian church.” Benson.

³ *An honourable rank.*] An excellent step or degree: *i. e.* will be advanced to the higher office of presbyter or bishop. See Macknight, Benson, and Doddridge. *Freedom of speech*: great confidence in persecuting times. See Newcome.

⁴ *Great freedom of speech.*] “And in these times of persecution great confidence in asserting and teaching the faith which Christians profess.” Newcome.

The directions I gave concerning the bishop I now repeat with respect to the deacons, That no person be appointed to that office who is a polygamist, or who, having divorced his first wife from insufficient reasons, is now married to another. And let those persons be chosen who have previously shown their capacity for discharging the office well, by governing their families with discretion, and by having trained up their children in habits of virtue and filial piety. For if the families of those who are appointed to offices in the church are disorderly and untractable, it reflects discredit upon the heads of those families, and will be a disgrace to the church. And though the rank of a deacon be inferior to that of the bishop or principal teacher, it is nevertheless an office of great respectability, and they who discharge its duties faithfully and well, will be esteemed and honoured by the church, and will in due time probably be advanced to superior stations. And in the mean time the testimony of their conscience, and the esteem in which they are held by wise and good men, will encourage them to teach the doctrine of Christ with manly freedom; and their wholesome doctrine, supported by the excellence of their example, will be crowned with success.

Ch. III.
Ver. 13.

4. This advice he has delivered to regulate the conduct of the evangelist during his own absence from Ephesus, whether for a longer or a shorter interval, ver. 14, 15.

I write these things unto thee in expectation of coming to thee very soon⁵; but if I delay, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, as a pillar and support of the truth⁶.

14.
15.

⁵ *In expectation of coming very soon.*] ταχίον, or, as the Alexandrine and others read, εν ταχει. It is quite impossible that when the apostle set out for Macedonia, Acts xx. after the tumult of Demetrius, intending to visit Corinth, and to settle the disorders which prevailed in that church, he should have expected to return *speedily* to Ephesus. This, therefore, could not have been the time when he wrote his letter. But if he wrote from Crete, agreeably to the hypothesis which has been proposed in the Introduction, he of course fully expected to return very soon, which would be his justification for having delegated such extraordinary powers to this youthful evangelist. Yet still it was possible that he might be either prevented by his enemies, or restrained by Providence, from returning to Ephesus so soon as he proposed. To provide for this contingency, he writes the letter which contains these particular directions to his young substitute. In this case, however, the apostle appears to have returned as soon as he intended, and to have relieved the evangelist from his burdensome responsibility.

⁶ *As a pillar, &c.*] The church is not the "pillar of truth," for it is represented as the temple itself. Somerville, Bengel, Griesbach, and Rosenmuller, end the sentence at ζωντος. q. d. "that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God. The pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy, great is the mystery," &c. With Benson, Wakefield, Newcome, and others, I have preferred applying the

Ch. III.
Ver. 15.

I am now in a situation, as you very well know, from which I expect speedily to return, and to relieve you from the weight of responsibility which I have imposed upon you. But as I am not my own master, and know not what may happen, lest my absence should be prolonged beyond what I at present purpose or expect, I have written these necessary directions and advices, that you, who, by sustaining the office of an evangelist, are constituted a pillar of the church, and a main support of Christian truth, may know in what manner to discharge the duties incumbent upon you in the arduous situation which you are now occupying at Ephesus; that, by simplicity of doctrine, and wisdom of conduct, you may indeed approve yourself a firm support and graceful ornament of that holy edifice, which is not, like the temple of Jerusalem, decorated with external splendour, nor, like the celebrated temple of Diana, consecrated to a senseless idol, but which is a spiritual and living temple, dedicated to the living and eternal God. This glorious building is the great body of believers, who are by their profession of the Christian doctrine consecrated to God, whom he claims as his peculiar property, among whom he dwells by the gifts and energies of his holy spirit, and whom, if they are faithful and obedient, he will raise, by his almighty energy, to a new, a glorious, and an endless life.

SECTION VII.

THE APOSTLE, after solemnly enumerating the principal facts upon which the evidence of the divine origin of the Christian religion is founded, proceeds to foretell many circumstances of the grand apostasy, against which he urges the evangelist to put the Ephesians upon their guard. Ch. iii. 16—iv. 7.

1. The apostle distinctly, but briefly, states some of the fundamental facts of the Christian religion, ver. 16.

16. *And without dispute, great is the mystery of religion*¹. *He who*² *was*

epithets *pillar and ground of truth* to the evangelist himself. See Gal. ii. 9, Rev. iii. 12. There is probably an allusion to the temple of Diana at Ephesus, or to the temple of Jerusalem.

¹ *The mystery of religion:*] *q. d.* Other religions have their mysteries, but the Christian religion contains a greater mystery than all: viz. that the gospel should be preached to, and received by, the heathen world; for this is what the apostle commonly means by the word *mystery*. See Eph. i. 9, iii. 3; of which he never speaks but with admiration. Εὐαγγελιστῶν: “*ipsa*

*manifested in the flesh*³, *was justified by the spirit*⁴, *appeared to his messengers*⁵, *was proclaimed to the nations*⁶, *was believed on in the world*⁷, *was taken up into glory*⁸.

Ch. III.
Ver. 16.

In the great and opulent city of Ephesus, which, on account of the magnificence and celebrity of the temple of Diana, may be regarded as the metropolis of heathen idolatry, you hear much of the solemn mysteries of hea-

religio Christiana, quæ pietatem non solum commendat, sed etiam promovet." Schleusner.— "The mystery of godliness, or, of true worship, is confessedly great. The long concealed and now discovered doctrines of the true religion, which is called εὐσεβεία, in opposition to the ἀσεβεία of the heathen." Newcome.

² *He who.*] There are three readings of this passage: ΘΣ, *God*; ΟΣ, *he who*; and Ο, *that which*. The Ephrem manuscript reads ΟΣ, *he who*; and probably the Alexandrine. This is adopted by Griesbach, who observes that ΘΣ and Ο are much more likely to be corrupted from ΟΣ, than *vice versa*. "All the old versions," says Dr. Clarke, (*Doct. of Trin.* No. 88, 89,) "have *who* or *which*." Also all the ancient Fathers, though the copies of many of them have it now in the printed text Θεός, *God*; yet from the tenor of their comments upon it, and from their never citing it in the Arian controversy, it appears that they always read ὅς, *who*; or, ὁ, *which*." He adds as a note, "It must not be judged from the present copies of the text in Nyssen and others, but from the manner of their commenting upon the place, how the text was read in their days." The editors of the Greek Fathers, misled by their prejudices, altered the text of their authors to agree with the received text. So Griesbach observes, it is certain that Cyril of Alexandria did not read Θεός, though that reading is frequently found in the printed text of that writer. Nor is it cited by any Greek father before the fifth or sixth century. Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople in the sixth century, is charged with corrupting the text. Archbishop Newcome says, that "if we read ὅς, *he who*, we have a similar construction Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18; Rom. viii. 32. See Dr. Benson's judicious note on the text. Also Griesbach's excellent note; and the judgement of Wetstein, Owen, and Nichols in Bowyer.

³ *Manifested in the flesh.*] He was a real man, and not a man in appearance only, as the Gnostics and Docetæ taught, to whom the apostle seems to allude. See ch. i. 4, vi. 20. Compare also 1 John iv. 2, 3, 2 John ver. 7. Perhaps the expression *manifested in the flesh* may allude to his appearance in a very humble form, not at all adapted to his high pretensions and claims.

⁴ *Justified by the spirit.*] *q. d.* Mean as was his appearance in comparison with the magnitude of his claims, he fully justified the character he assumed by his miracles, by his resurrection, and by the gifts of the holy spirit. "was justified by the miraculous and extraordinary gifts of the spirit." Benson.

⁵ *Appeared to his messengers.*] "ωφθη ἀγγελοις, *seen by messengers.*" Wakefield. *i. e.* He appeared to his apostles, to those whom he appointed to be the witnesses of his resurrection and the heralds of his gospel. This is an obvious and a most important sense, well suited to the connexion. That he was seen by angels, or celestial spirits, according to the common interpretation, is scarcely intelligible, and at best irrelevant. See Benson; also Gosset in Bowyer.

⁶ *Proclaimed to the nations.*] This publication of the gospel to the Gentiles is the great mystery which was so long unknown, so utterly unexpected, and so offensive to the Jews: which had been revealed to the apostle, which he was commissioned to teach, and upon which he so fondly insists as an unexampled display of divine mercy. See Benson.

⁷ *Believed on.*] ἐπισευθη. Wakefield supposes ἐπισευθη is here to be taken for ἐπισωθη, as he has himself translated it 2 Thess. i. 10, Rom. iii. 2. He would render it *established by evidence*.

⁸ *Was taken up into glory.*] or, *gloriously received*. ἀνεληφθη, *was received*. This word is applied to our Lord's ascension, Mark xvi. 19, Acts i. 2, 11, 22. See Luke ix. 51; and the clause is generally understood of that remarkable event. A friend of Dr. Benson understands it of the glorious reception which the gospel obtained in the world: see Acts xx. 13, 14, xxiii. 31; Eph. vi. 15; 2 Tim. iv. 11; which justify this translation of ἀνεληφθη. The objection against which interpretation is, that it coincides with the preceding clause; but if Mr. Wakefield's interpretation be admitted, this objection is precluded.

Ch. III.
Ver. 16.

then worship. But to all who impartially consider the subject it will appear beyond all contradiction that the Christian religion, which teaches the true worship of the Supreme Being, reveals far more extraordinary and more useful mysteries than heathenism can boast.

Jesus of Nazareth, a man in all respects like his brethren, who appeared in a humble form during his personal ministry, and who suffered an ignominious death, justified his pretensions to a divine legation by the miracles which he wrought, and particularly by his resurrection from the dead. Of this interesting event we have the clearest evidence; for he showed himself alive after his suffering, to the apostles, whom he had chosen to be witnesses of this important fact, and to be his messengers to publish his gospel through the world; and among others he condescended to appear even to myself. In consequence of this assurance, and in virtue of the important trust which was confided to them, the apostles of Christ have published his gospel to all mankind, without distinction of Jew or Gentile; and the doctrine which they taught has been so powerfully attested by the various miracles which they have been enabled to perform in confirmation of it, that it has already met with a glorious reception in the world: thousands both of Jews and Gentiles have embraced the Christian faith, and become members of the Christian community, and the present success of the gospel is a happy earnest of its perpetual establishment, and its increasing prosperity. Finally, this distinguished teacher ascended up into heaven in the presence of his apostles; from whence he will return at the appointed time, in power and great glory, to raise the dead and to judge the world.

2. The apostle proceeds to predict the great apostasy of the latter days.
Ch. iv. 1—5.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 1.

Yet¹ the spirit expressly declareth², that in latter times³ some will apostatize⁴ from the faith, attending to deceitful spirits⁵, and to doctrines concerning demons⁶.

¹ *Yet.*] So Newcome, who explains it thus in his note: "However, important and instructive as these truths are, the holy spirit hath revealed that corruptions of the Christian doctrine will arise."

² *Expressly declareth.*] Macknight supposes, "with an audible voice;" but this is improbable. Joseph Mede suspects an allusion to Dan. xi. 36; and that *the latter times* are, the last period of the Roman empire, about A.D. 400.

³ *In latter times.*] "in the times long after the apostle's days." Benson. See 2 Tim. iii. 1.—"*Non est temporibus ultimis, sed secuturis.*" Rosenmuller.

⁴ *Some will apostatize:*] not all, even though it may be a great majority. See Bishop Newton, Dr. Benson, and Archbishop Newcome.

Such is the present state of the Christian religion, so pure in its doctrine, so satisfactory in its evidence, so extensive in its propagation, and so glorious in its prospects, that it seems natural to expect that the whole world will soon be converted to the profession of it. But the spirit of prophecy distinctly announces a state of things very contrary to our fond expectations and desires; for I am authorized expressly to declare, that in after times, at what period God only knows, some professing Christians, and those not a few in number, nor insignificant in rank and influence, will grossly apostatize from the primitive faith; and will introduce doctrines foreign to the truth and to the spirit of genuine Christianity. They will listen to men who falsely pretend to be divinely inspired, and who will lead them into gross and dangerous errors. And in the first place, they will teach strange doctrines concerning departed men; that their spirits are still in a conscious state; and that by the prayers of the church, and the use of certain unmeaning ceremonies, they may be canonized, and become entitled to religious worship: thus introducing an idolatry into the Christian religion very little different from, or superior to, those abominable rites which they profess to have renounced.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 1.

Through the hypocrisy of liars, whose consciences are seared.

2.

This miserable and mischievous idolatry will be introduced by the instruction and recommendation of men professing extraordinary piety, but who in fact are mere deceivers, teachers of falsehood, and hardened in iniquity beyond all feeling of remorse, and all sense of shame.

Forbidding to marry, commanding abstinence from meats⁷, which God

3.

³ *Deceitful spirits.*] "false prophets, pretending to inspiration." Newcome. See Mac-knight.

⁶ *Demons.*] The spirits of dead men; the objects of popular worship. See Bishop Newton and Archbishop Newcome. *Doctrines of*, i. e. concerning, *demons*. For a similar construction see Gal. ii. 20, Heb. vi. 2." Benson. "doctrines about dead men." Wakefield. "The doctrine concerning the spirits or souls of dead men," says Dr. Priestley, "makes one of the most important articles in the corruptions of the church of Rome."

⁷ *Forbidding—commanding.*] "*Ἀντὶ ἀπεχεσθαι* est ellipsis participii *κελευοντων*. *Similis vero ellipsis* 1 Cor. xiv. 34." Rosenmuller. "A bold ellipsis well supplied by our translation." Benson. "Our author abounds in these hyperbata," says Mr. Wakefield, who translates the passage, "giving commands about abstinence from marriage and from meats." "In the grand apostasy this has been eminently fulfilled in the bishops, monks, friars, nuns, and secular priests, in whom marriage is looked upon as worse than adultery." Also, "the trifling distinction of meats which the church of Rome observes in Lent, and on two days every week throughout the year, is exactly agreeable to what was here predicted." Benson. "The doctrine of fasting, and the abstinence from particular meats at particular times, is so particularly pointed out here, that it is extraordinary that the prophecy should not have prevented its own accomplishment." Dr. Priestley.

- Ch. IV. *created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and acknow-*
 Ver. 4. *ledge this truth*¹, *that every creature of God is good, and that nothing is*
 5. *to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is made holy by the*
*divine appointment*² *and by prayer*³.

Another mark of this lamentable apostasy will be the disparagement of marriage, which God has instituted for the most wise and beneficent purposes; and the encouraging, and in some cases absolutely enjoining, celibacy, under the absurd pretence of superior purity and elevation of mind. These lying teachers will also lay great stress upon distinctions of food; enjoining upon some, habitual abstinence from every kind of animal food; appointing long annual fasts; and setting apart particular days, in which abstinence from certain kinds of food will be represented as highly meritorious, and the indiscriminate use of meat, as a great and almost unpardonable sin; thus discovering a spirit directly opposite to that of the gospel, which teaches that every thing which is fit for the food of man may at any time be lawfully used by him, being created for this purpose by the benevolent Maker of all, who requires no other condition of the participation of his bounty, but a grateful acknowledgement of his goodness, and the temperate use of his blessings. There are indeed some, who, having been educated in Jewish prejudices, are not yet fully acquainted with their Christian liberty. In them it would be improper to indulge indiscriminately in the use of those kinds of food which the law pronounces unclean, till their minds are fully satisfied of the lawfulness of it. And the gospel makes allowance for uninformed and weak consciences, while it prohibits all infringement of the rights of others. The liberty, therefore, of using any kind of food indiscriminately, can with propriety be extended only to those who, being well instructed in the liberal genius of the Christian doctrine, and who, being apprized that all ceremonial distinctions are abolished by the Christian law, believe and

¹ *This truth, that every creature, &c.]* So Wakefield; with whom Rosenmuller agrees: "*eam nempe veritatem, quam statim ver. 4 commemorat.*" This implies that the indiscriminate use of food is not lawful to those who entertain conscientious scruples upon the subject. See Rom. xiv. 23.

² *By divine appointment.]* So Wakefield. Literally, "by the word of God," as in the common version. "The gospel," says Dr. Benson, "has abolished the ceremonial law, and the distinction between meats clean and unclean." "The discriminating notes of these apostatizers," says Archbishop Newcome, "belong remarkably to the church of Rome."

³ *And by prayer.]* Bishop Newton observes, that "man is free to partake of all the good creatures of God, but thanksgiving is the necessary condition. What then can be said of those who have their tables spread with the most plentiful gifts of God, and yet constantly sit down and rise up again without suffering one thought of the giver to intrude upon them? Can such persons be reputed either to believe or acknowledge the truth?" See Macknight.

acknowledge that all the creatures of God, capable of administering nourishment to man, are in a moral and ceremonial sense equally good; and that nothing is to be rejected as unclean which is received with a thankful spirit. For that, whatever distinctions of food might be permitted or enjoined under the Jewish dispensation, the gospel sets them all aside, and allows the free use of every kind of food, being all sanctified and made lawful by the express appointment of God in the abolition of the ceremonial law, and by that blessing of God, which Christians, who act consistently with their principles, will never fail to implore upon their food, and by those thanksgivings which they will habitually render to him for the riches of his bounty.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 5.

3. The apostle urges Timothy to insist upon these topics in his public instructions, and to discourage the growth of a spirit of superstition among the believers at Ephesus, ver. 6, 7.

If thou remind the brethren of these things, thou wilt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of the faith, and of that good doctrine to which thou hast attained⁴. But reject profane and old women's fables⁵, and exercise thyself in piety⁶.

6.

7.

If you inculcate faithfully and strongly upon the brethren at Ephesus the fundamental principles of the Christian doctrine, which I have thus briefly stated; if you warn them of that great apostasy which is to take place in future times; and if you caution them against those superstitious practices which directly lead to it, which some are too ready to introduce, and particularly against the affectation of superior purity, the great merit of celibacy, and that useless distinction of meats and days, upon which the Jewish zealots lay so great a stress, you will thus approve yourself a faithful minister of the gospel, thoroughly instructed in its salutary truths; and you will show that you have not taken so much pains to acquire information to no purpose.

⁴ *To which thou hast attained.*] “παρηκολυθηκας, quam es assecutus. Nimirum sensu et intelligentia.” Rosenmuller. “with which thou art acquainted.” Wakefield. “to which thou hast adhered.” Benson; who insinuates that possibly Timothy might lean rather too much to those Jewish prejudices in which he had been educated; which might induce the apostle to repeat his cautions.

⁵ *Reject, &c.*] “Affanias procul habe à te eorum, qui vel ex Paganismo vel Judaismo ad Christum transierunt.” Rosenmuller. “Instead of acquainting himself with the idle traditions of the Jews, or tracing out the fabulous generations of the Æons, Timothy was to exercise himself in acquiring the more extensive knowledge, and in attaining the more complete practice of pure Christianity.” Benson. See ch. i. 4. Profane old women's or old wives' fables. “Fabulas istas vocat profanas, quia nulla Dei revelatione nituntur; deinde aniles: i. e. absurdas, non minus quam illas quas aniculæ puerulis recitant.” Rosenmuller.

⁶ *In piety.*] “Exerce te potius ad veram pietatem.” Rosenmuller. See ch. iii. 16.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 7.

And let me once more warn you to reject all those foolish, traditionary tales, which the Jewish rabbis relate in order to countenance their trifling and puerile injunctions, which are only fit for the nursery, and which every man of right understanding must hold in contempt; and take pains to improve in the knowledge and the practice of that pure and rational and manly religion, which alone is acceptable to God and beneficial to mankind.

It is impossible to read this section with attention, without remarking the precision and distinctness with which the apostle here, as well as upon other occasions, foretells the grand apostasy which was to take place through the whole Christian church; which, though eminently conspicuous in the church of Rome, is not altogether limited to it. And from the extreme improbability of the event, when it was foretold, we may certainly infer his prophetic inspiration, and the truth of the doctrine which he was authorized to teach. While, on the other hand, this circumstantial prediction of a state of things so contrary to what might naturally have been expected and desired, may lead us to acquiesce in it, as what was foreseen and intended by Divine Providence for the accomplishment of the most beneficial, though unknown, purposes; and which shall in due time certainly terminate in the perpetual and universal triumph of truth and goodness.

SECTION VIII.

THE APOSTLE states the great importance of practical religion, and urges Timothy to maintain an exemplary behaviour. Ch. iv. 8—16.

1. The apostle states the great importance of practical religion, the reward annexed to which will make ample compensation for all temporal sufferings, ver. 8—11.

8. *For bodily exercise¹ is profitable for little, but piety is profitable for all things²; having a promise both of the present and of the future life.*

¹ *Bodily exercise.*] *σωματική γυμνασία.* Whitby, Estius, Doddridge and Newcome, understand this phrase as an allusion to the gymnastic exercises, and the celebrated games of Greece. Benson and Macknight understand it "of the corporeal mortifications recommended and practised by the Essenes, an ascetic sect of the Jews. *Γυμναζεῖν proprie est exerceri in gymnasiis: inde cœpit transferri ad omnia quæ agendo discimus.*" Rosenmuller; who thinks that the apostle, by the expression *bodily exercise*, alludes to those superstitious practices against which he had been warning his young disciple and friend.

I have been urging you to exercise yourself in the practice of true religion, to make a serious business of it, and to endure all that labour and self-denial which may be necessary to your success in it. Follow my advice, and be assured, Timothy, your labour will not be lost. That bodily exercise, which is necessary to success in the celebrated games of Greece, may be useful to promote health, vigour, and agility, to secure the garland of victory and the applause of nations. But these are comparatively trifling things. The rewards of true religion are infinitely superior. Health, competence, content, and cheerfulness, together with the divine blessing, are the natural and the promised rewards of industry, integrity, prudence, and piety in this life; to which the revelation of the gospel annexes the grand prize of immortality. While others therefore contend for that which, if obtained, is at best a corruptible crown, we strive for one that is incorruptible. They labour for time, we for eternity.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 8.

This is true doctrine³, and worthy to be received by all.

9.

What I have declared concerning the importance of true religion, and the rewards annexed to it, is a solemn and momentous truth, which cannot be too often inculcated, too firmly believed, nor too steadily regarded.

For, with this view, we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the protector of all men, especially of believers⁴.

10.

As a proof that I am sincere in what I advance concerning the importance and the rewards of true religion, I may appeal to my own labours and sufferings in this honourable cause. For you well know that my life is devoted to the instruction of mankind in the great truths of the gospel, and the practice of evangelical piety; every where insisting that this, and this alone, can ensure peace here, and happiness hereafter. For this, I am on the one hand reproached by the Jews, as treating with contempt the rites of the law, and on the other, I am persecuted by the heathen, as seducing men to re-

² For little—for all things.] “προς ολιγον, i. e. χρονον—προς παντα, i. e. χρονον.” Rosenmuller. Wakefield also translates the passage, “Bodily exercise is profitable for a short time only, but godliness is profitable for ever.” “Bodily exercise profiteth little, viz. for health and strength, for obtaining a corruptible crown. Godliness has the promise of the life which now is, see Mark x. 30, Rom. viii. 28. Good men have reliance on God, peace of mind and conscience, hope of future happiness, and those temporal blessings which industry, temperance, integrity, and frugality, have a natural tendency to produce.” Newcome.

³ This is true doctrine.] Dr. Benson observes that “St. Paul has used this expression four times, 1 Tim. i. 15, 2 Tim. ii. 11, Tit. iii. 8, and in this place. They were all matters of certain truth and of great importance; and the apostle used this expression to call up men’s attention to them.”

⁴ The protector, &c.] σωτηρ “the protector and preserver of all mankind, but his goodness has been most abundant to Christians.” Archbishop Newcome.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 10.

nounce the religion of their ancestors, and to confine themselves to the worship of the one true and living God, who is indeed the only proper object of religious adoration, the benevolent parent, preserver, and benefactor of the human race, and to whose mercy in Jesus Christ, believers, especially, are under the highest obligations.

11. *These things give in charge and teach.*

Herein, O Timothy, I strictly and solemnly enjoin you to follow my example, and whatever labours may be necessary, or whatever reproach you may incur, persist in teaching the importance of practical religion, and in charging those to whom your discourses are addressed, to maintain an habitual and supreme regard to God.

2. The apostle exhorts Timothy to conciliate respect by exhibiting himself as a pattern of Christian virtue, and diligently to improve himself in those qualifications which were requisite to his reputation and success as an evangelist, ver. 12—15.

12. *Let no man despise thy youth¹: but be thou an example to the believers, in conversation, in behaviour², in love³, in fidelity, in purity.*

You are very young for the important station that you occupy in the church, and it will require great discretion in you to behave in such a manner as may best comport with your character and office. Be therefore constantly upon your guard, that you give no just occasion for harsh and severe remarks; exhibit to all the Christians at Ephesus an eminent example of discretion and good sense in your conversation, of prudence in your general behaviour, of a kind and tender disposition of spirit, of faithfulness to your promises and to your profession, and of temperance, purity, and strict habitual self-government.

13. *Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to instruction.*

Whether my return to Ephesus be speedy, as I hope, or whether it be deferred to a more distant period than I at present intend or foresee, be sure

¹ *Despise thy youth.*] This caution is a strong presumption in favour of the supposition that this epistle was written A.D. 55 or 56, and negatives the hypothesis which places the date ten years later, when such a caution would have been unnecessary.

² *In behaviour.*] “*αναστροφῇ, vivendi, et agendi ratio.*” Schleusner. In this sense the word is commonly used in the New Testament; and Schleusner has referred to Polybius and Arrian to prove that the word is used in the same sense by Greek authors, in confirmation of which he also refers to Wesselingius. Stephens in his *Thesaurus* denies that the word is used in that signification by classical writers. See Macknight.

³ *In love.*] The received text adds, “*in spirit*,” but these words are wanting in the Alexandrine and other copies and versions, and are rejected by Griesbach.

to occupy the interval, whether longer or shorter, in the faithful and judicious discharge of the duty of your station. Attend to the reading of the Scriptures, both privately for your own benefit, and publicly for the instruction of the church. Admonish and exhort your hearers to the discharge of those duties which the gospel requires, and instruct them in the pure doctrine of the Christian religion, warning them against those errors with which Jewish superstition, or heathen philosophy, would deform the simplicity of Christian truth.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 13.

Neglect not the gift⁴ which is in thee, which was conferred upon thee because of previous recommendation⁵, with the imposition of the hands of the presbytery.

14.

⁴ *The gift, &c.]* The extraordinary gifts of the spirit. See Benson, Doddridge, Newcome, Macknight. “*Recte ven. Noesselt. statuere videtur: in locis N. T. omnibus, qui tradunt, quosdam, susceptâ fide Christiand, per apostolos, impositis manibus, quanquam et adhibita invocatione et accuratiore in doctrinâ Christiand institutione, spiritu sancto imbutos fuisse, nihil aliud quæri et intelligi debere, quam effectam his omnibus singularem animorum concitationem, qua tanquam divini Numinis afflatu se senserint impulsî, ut illam doctrinam læti, ac imperterriti profiterentur.*” Rosenmuller.

That the extraordinary gifts of the holy spirit were not so common as some have imagined, may be readily conceded. But to maintain, with this writer, that giving the spirit by imposition of the apostle's hands *never* signifies any thing more than exciting courage and zeal, appears to me to be quite irreconcilable to the language of the New Testament, and to lead, by natural consequence, to explaining away the miracles of the gospel altogether; for few of the miracles of the New Testament rest upon more direct evidence than the gifts of the holy spirit to the primitive converts. Gal. iii. 2—5, 1 Cor. xii.

⁵ *Because of previous recommendation.]* δια προφητειας.] See ch. i. 18, and the note there. The apostle took Timothy with him as a companion upon the recommendation of the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, Acts xvi. 2. These brethren, whose recommendation weighed so much with the apostle, were probably men of eminence, and prophets or teachers in the church: and the apostle received Timothy in consequence of their prophecies, or previous testimonies concerning him.

This appears to me to be an easy solution of a difficult text. And it only requires that the word προφητεια should be understood in its proper and primary sense as a *previous* but not *inspired* declaration. And it is not easy to see why the evangelist Timothy should be the object of inspired prophecies: though it was very becoming for him to be, and we know it as a fact that he was recommended to the apostle by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. It is generally allowed that the word προφητης does not always signify an inspired person, nor προφητεια an inspired declaration: see Matt. xiii. 35, Tit. i. 12, Rom. xii. 6, 1 Thess. v. 20. Bengelius proposes to “connect δια προφητειας with τῶν πρεσβυτερῶν, and to inclose the intermediate words between commas. *Imposition of hands* was made by one, viz. the apostle: *Prophecy* was made by many, and by equals, who wished Timothy success;” *q. d.* given thee at the recommendation of the presbytery with the imposition of *my* hands. See Bowyer. “*Which was given thee by authority*: i. e. of teachers, or, ‘for the purpose of teaching,’ according as the word προφητειας is taken in the singular or the plural number.” Wakefield. “according to the prophecies, or, after some prophecies.” Benson; who refers to Mark ii. 1, Acts xxiv. 17, as authorities for this sense of δια. “*According to prophecy*: i. e. by particular inspiration moving him so to do.” Macknight. “agreeably to the predictions of the Christian prophets.” Newcome. “*Quæ data est tibi per prophetiam.*” Grotius; who remarks, that prophets are said to do what they foretell. Ch. i. 18, Jer. i. 10. “*Quod datum est tibi per prophetiam: cum scilicet propheta, instinctu spiritus sancti, juberent te in Evangelii ministerium eligi: testantes et prædicantes insignem te virum in dicendo et adhortando fore.*” Slichtingius. Both these learned commentators

Ch. IV.
Ver. 14.

I have conferred upon you the office of an evangelist, and the gifts of the spirit, agreeably to the earnest recommendation of persons of the greatest experience and most eminent piety in Lystra and Derbe. After which, by solemn imposition of hands, you were commended by the elders of those churches to the blessing of God, when I associated you with myself in my evangelical mission. Let not these gifts lie dormant in your breast; nor let the duties of your office be neglected, but let them be exercised and improved to their proper use, either for converting the heathen, or for the edification of the church.

15. *Make these things thy care¹, be wholly in them, that thy improvement in all things may be apparent.*

Regard the honourable and faithful discharge of your office at Ephesus as your proper and most important business; let it engross your whole mind, devote yourself entirely to it; suffer no foreign consideration, no motives of self-indulgence, or secular advantage, to draw off your attention from it; and let your application to the various branches of your ministerial duty be so constant, and indefatigable, that all may bear testimony to your faithfulness, to your improvement, and to your success.

16. *Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine; continue in them², for by doing this, thou wilt save both thyself and thy hearers³.*

suppose that inspired prophets marked out Timothy as a fit person to be employed as a missionary of the gospel; and with them Crellius agrees. Przypcovius takes *προφητείας* in the accusative case, and understands the apostle that gifts were conferred upon Timothy for the purpose of teaching—*ad prophetandum, hoc est, docendum*; which is one sense that Mr. Wakefield has assigned. But this cannot be the meaning of the word ch. i. 18; which speaks of prophecies which *went before* concerning him.

Perhaps the word *χαρισμα* may signify an office gratuitously conferred. 1 Pet. iv. 10.—“*munus in ecclesia Christiana demandatum.*” Schleusner. See Rom xii. 6, and the true interpretation of the text may be, “Neglect not thine office, i. e. *of evangelist*, which was conferred upon thee, or given to thee, i. e. *by me*; in consequence of previous recommendation, with imposition of the hands of the presbytery:” which, as Dr. Benson observes, “was frequently done in the apostle’s days where no spiritual gift was imparted, when a superior blessed or prayed for an inferior,” and when any were solemnly designated and set apart for some important office. See Acts xiii. 3.

¹ *Make these things thy care.*] “The word *μελετη*,” says Dr. Benson, “is used to denote all the preparatory exercises of mind or body, which are made use of by those who are desirous of excelling in any art or science. It is applied to those who were training up for rhetoricians, or to those who designed to contend in the agonistic games, or to engage in the dangers and fatigues of war. The apostle recommends to Timothy, by proper previous exercises, to qualify himself for excelling in the discharge of the work of an evangelist.” “*Hæc meditare, in his, totus esto.*” Rosenmüller.

² *Continue in them.*] These words are probably a marginal gloss: they are wanting in the Æthiopic. Owen ap. Bowyer.

³ *Wilt save both thyself and thy hearers.*] “These advices,” says Dr. Priestley, “are very intelligible, and peculiarly excellent and important. They show the necessity of ministers labouring to form their own minds, of their acquiring useful knowledge, and using their utmost

I conclude what I had to recommend concerning your personal and public conduct with two general advices; take heed to thyself, and take heed to thy doctrine. Let your conduct be exemplary, and your doctrine truly evangelical, the pure, uncorrupted truth of the gospel. Persevere in this honourable course. If you forsake the path of virtue, or the truth of Christianity, you will lose the benefit, and forfeit the reward of your past wisdom and fidelity. But by inflexible adherence to the practice of virtue, and to the purity of the Christian doctrine, you will in the first place ensure your own salvation, and in the second place you will do all that can be done for the salvation of your hearers. In many instances success will probably attend your pious labours; and where this is wanting, still you will not have laboured in vain; your work will be with the Lord, and your reward with your God.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 16.

SECTION IX.

THE APOSTLE gives directions to Timothy as to the most prudent method of administering reproof, and lays down rules concerning the relief of those widows who were to be supported by the church, and also concerning the qualifications and maintenance of others, who were to be employed in its offices among persons of their own sex. Ch. v. 1—16.

Ch. V.

1. The apostle gives advice to the evangelist, as to the best method of administering reproof. Ch. v. 1, 2.

Do not harshly rebuke an elderly man⁴, but beseech him, as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity. Ver. 1.

Ver. 1.

It does not become you who are a young man to administer reproof in a harsh and offensive manner to those who are more advanced in life, nor will such reproofs ever produce a good effect. If then you see any thing amiss

endeavours for the improvement of their hearers. The apostle likewise intimates, though in a more indirect manner, the value of their labours with respect to their people. And if there be a duty of ministers, there must be a corresponding one on the part of the people, and of equal importance. If the ministers are to communicate instruction, the people are to receive it, not implicitly, but to give their best attention, and then judge for themselves. If it be the duty of the ministers to exhort, it is that of the people to improve by the word of exhortation."

⁴ *An elderly man.*] The opposition in the two clauses of the verse shows that the word *πρεσβυτερος* is here used to express the age, not the office, of the person reproofed. Dr. Benson has an excellent note upon the wisdom of the apostle's advice.

Ch. V.
Ver. 2.

in a man that is much older than yourself, modestly, and with becoming humility, admonish him of his fault, and request him to change his conduct; addressing him as a father, with the respect due to his age and station. If you would reprove younger men, so as to produce a good effect, you must speak to them with the kindness of a brother, and let it appear that you do not reprove because you take pleasure in finding fault, but because you regard it as an indispensable, though a disagreeable duty. In like manner, administer reproof to elder women as to mothers, and to the younger as sisters, with that modesty and decorum which will not fail to produce a proper effect, and which becomes your character as a minister of the gospel.

2. The apostle directs, that widows should be taken care of; but that those widows who had families capable of supporting them, should be maintained by their families, ver. 3, 4.

3. *Support¹ widows who are widows indeed².*

Let those widows who are women of good character, who have no near relations, and who have not the means of supporting themselves, be maintained out of the public stock.

4. *But if any widow have children or grand-children, let these learn first to show piety at home³, and to requite their progenitors, for this is acceptable to God⁴.*

If any widows have descendants capable of maintaining them, there is no reason why they should be supported at the public expense. Let children and grand-children, when they have provided decently for their own families, regard it as an indispensable duty to maintain their aged parents, and thus to requite the care that was bestowed upon them in the helpless years of infancy and childhood. This conduct is acceptable to God; it is a branch of true religion, and will be creditable to your Christian profession.

¹ Support.] “τιμα, honour; i. e. support or maintain: see ver. 17; also Matt. xv. 4, 5, 6, Mark vii. 9—13, Acts xxviii. 10.” Benson.

² Widows indeed.] “who are what that word importeth, really bereaved and desolate.” Benson. Grotius and Calvin suppose an allusion to the etymology of the word: χηρω, destituo, privor.

³ First to show piety at home.] Macknight’s translation is, “Let these learn first piously to take care of their own families, and then to requite their parents.” Duty to parents was called piety. See Newcome in loc. and Wetstein on Acts xvii. 33. “Rectius de liberis viduarum hæc intelliguntur. Nam ευσεβειν κ. τ. λ. proprie est venerari, colere familiam suam, i. e. sustentare. Οικος, familia et omnes qui ad eam pertinent, matres etiam, et avia.” Rosenmuller; who quotes a passage from Chrysostom giving the same interpretation.

⁴ Acceptable to God.] The received text reads “good and acceptable;” but the best copies omit the words καλον και, and Griesbach leaves them out of the text.

3. The apostle requires, that widows who are really destitute should be decently supported, and animadvertes severely upon those widows who lead a life of dissipation, and upon all who are unwilling to contribute to the relief of their aged parents, ver. 5—8. Ch. v.

*But she who is a widow indeed, and left alone, hopeth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day*⁵. Ver. 5.

I have directed you to maintain widows who are widows indeed. By this expression, I mean those widows who are both solitary and pious; widows who have no children or near relations able to afford them needful assistance; and whose character is an ornament to their profession; who believe in God, who obey the gospel, and who maintain a spirit of habitual devotion by the regular performance of religious exercises at stated and convenient seasons.

*But she who rioteth in pleasure*⁶ *is dead while she liveth.* 6.

A widow who, being at liberty from the restraint of the conjugal state, gives herself up to a life of luxury and dissipation, is a disgrace to a religious community; and with respect to every virtuous principle, and to every valuable purpose of life, she is as though she were dead.

These things also give in charge, that they may be blameless. 7.

Give these directions to the Ephesians, concerning the distinction to be made between those widows who do, and those who do not need, and merit, to be supported from the funds of the society, that they may know how to conduct themselves with discretion and propriety.

*But if any provide not for his own, but especially for those of his own household, he hath renounced the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever*⁷. 8.

I have directed that those who are able shall maintain their widowed parents. This direction, I am confident, will be disputed by none who are worthy of the Christian name. For if any one who is able to maintain a

⁵ *Night and day.*] “who prays morning and evening, who is stated and regular in devotion.” Doddridge.

⁶ *Who rioteth in pleasure.*] So Newcome. Dr. Whitby observes, that the original word *σπαταλῶσα* especially refers to drinking strong and costly liquors. *Is dead.* The same thought occurs in some heathen writers. “It was reckoned a beautiful saying of Pythagoras, that a worthless man is a dead man. That the same thought is not as much admired in St. Paul,” says Dr. Benson, “can proceed from nothing but an unreasonable partiality for what is of heathen extraction, and an ungenerous contempt of what is Jewish or Christian.”

⁷ *Worse than an unbeliever.*] “*graviter accusat liberos et nepotes divites, qui sinebant ecclesie oneri esse eos quos ipsi alere debebant.* Ethnico pejor: quia Ethnici suas primum domos tutantur, suasque necessitudines fovendas omnibus modis censent. Cicero in Ep. ad Capitonem: suos quisque debet tueri.” Rosenmuller.

Ch. V.
Ver. 8.

widowed mother should rather suffer her to be dependent upon public charity, and indeed if he does not provide according to his ability for every member of his family, he might as well make a formal and public renunciation of Christianity at once. He has renounced it, in fact, by refusing to comply with its most obvious requisitions; and he is in truth a greater enemy to the gospel than an avowed unbeliever; for his conduct in neglecting a duty which is practised by unbelievers themselves, is a scandal to the honourable cause which he professes to espouse.

4. He describes the character and qualifications of those widows who were to be admitted as deaconesses, and employed as instructors of their own sex, ver. 9, 10.

9. *Let not a widow be admitted upon the list¹ who is under sixty years of*
10. *age, having been the wife of one man²; in reputation for good works; if she have educated children, if she have entertained strangers, if she have washed the feet of the saints³, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently attended to every kind office⁴.*

Let all widows who are in want of relief, and who maintain good characters, be maintained from the contributions of the church, and let them be employed as occasion may require in acts of public hospitality and charity. But let not such persons be admitted to the honourable distinction of permanent officers in the Christian society, till they have reached their sixtieth year; nor then, unless they have always led virtuous and irreproachable lives. An aged widow may be received with propriety into the number of deaconesses and instructors, if she have not for any cause whatever divorced herself

¹ *The list :*] that is, of deaconesses. Archbishop Newcome inserts the word into the text; and Benson, Doddridge, and all the commentators agree that this must be the apostle's meaning; for surely he could not intend that no widows who were under sixty years of age should participate in the alms of the church.

² *The wife of one man.*] Women could divorce their husbands. Mark x. 12, *Poli Synop.* See ch. iii. 2. Newcome. Also Benson's note on ch. iii. 2. In the case of the fornicator at Corinth, 1 Cor. v., the woman had divorced the father to marry the son.

³ *Washed the feet.*] "a usual piece of civility, as well as a great refreshment in the eastern countries to wash a person's feet, or to take care that it should be done for them." Gen. xviii. 4, xix. 2; Luke vii. 38, 44; John xiii. 5, 14, 15." Benson.

⁴ *Attended to every kind office.*] See Wakefield. Dr. Macknight justly observes, that the poor widows cannot be supposed to have done all this at their own expense. Hence he infers, that having been deaconesses in the younger part of life, at the age of sixty they were advanced to the office of instructors or female presbyters. This idea of Dr. Macknight is perhaps countenanced by Rom. xvi. 1, as an aged woman would hardly have undertaken so long a journey. It is also possible that widows who received alms might be employed by the church in performing the offices of humanity and hospitality previously to their appointment to the office of deaconess.

from her own husband, and married another while the former was living; which practice, however it may be allowed by the laws of heathen states, is forbidden by the purity of the Christian institute. If such a person, while in her noviciate, have given useful instruction to the children who were placed by the church under her care; if she have provided lodging for strangers whom the church has entertained; if she have condescended to the humblest offices of kindness and hospitality, and have washed the feet of the guests of the church; if she have visited and succoured the afflicted and distressed, and have abounded in works of humanity and kindness while she was a widow, receiving the church's alms; such a person may with propriety be advanced to those offices which the Christian church has allotted to the female sex. The excellence of her character will be a pledge for her future conduct, and will do credit to any station in which she may be placed.

Ch. V.
Ver. 10.

5. He assigns reasons why he disapproves of admitting younger widows to this honourable station, ver. 11—15.

But younger widows refuse; for when they grow weary of the restraints of Christ they will marry⁵: exposing themselves to censure⁶, because they violate their first promise⁷.

11.

12.

Discreet, steady, and aged matrons are the only persons properly qualified to occupy the station of female deacons and instructors. If, therefore, any who are younger should desire to be admitted, let them be refused; for, however zealous they may be for a time, they will probably by degrees grow

⁵ *They grow weary of restraint.*] *κατασφηνισωσι*. Erasmus derives the word from “*σφειν*, *metaphora sumpta a jumentis, quæ cum pabulo ferociunt, avellunt habenas, et suo arbitrio feruntur.*”—“*σφηνισιν*, ut nos docent Græcorum grammatici, est *σφειν ἡνίας*.” Grotius; who explains the passage, “*Postquam tædere eos cepit istius servitutis quam ecclesiæ promiserant. Per Christum intellige ecclesiam.*” Glassius and Le Clerc translate the clause, “*who do not obey the reins.*” Estius observes, that *Χριστῶ* is governed by *κατα* in composition: *q. d.* They pull the reins contrary to Christ. “*When they grow weary of the restraints of Christ, they wish to marry.*” Wakefield. The apostle's idea seems to be, that widows when they become deaconesses, or teachers, are as it were married to Christ, and pledge themselves to devote their whole time to the service of the church: but if they quit their stations and marry again, which young widows would often be inclined to do, they as it were violate their conjugal faith, and expose themselves to censure for their irresolution. Dr. Priestley supposes that the apostle refers not merely to their marrying again, but to their marrying unbelievers.

⁶ *Exposing themselves to censure.*] “*are blameable.*” Wakefield: not, as in the public version, “*having damnation.*” “*Κριμα* vocat *judicium probarum, ab earum facto dissentiens.*” Grotius. For the difference between *κριμα* and *κατακριμα* see 1 Cor. xi. 32. “*κρ. non de æterna damnatione, sed latiore sensu de culpa sumitur, seu vitio reprehensioni obnoxio.*” Rosenmuller.

⁷ *Their first promise:*] that is, “*the promise they had made of leading a single life, and devoting themselves to the offices of religion.*” Macknight. “*v. g. se eleemosynis non abusuras, et vitam honestam acturas, ecclesiæque inservituras esse.*” Rosenmuller.

Ch. V.
Ver. 12.

weary of the restraints to which they have subjected themselves, and may choose to enter again into the conjugal state. Thus they bring themselves into disgrace by violating the resolution they formed when they were admitted into those offices of the church, which are appropriated to, and can only with propriety be performed by, matrons who are not involved in the cares and troubles of the conjugal life.

13. *And withal, being idle, they learn to go about from house to house, and are not only idle, but tattlers also, and meddlers, speaking things which they ought not.*

If young and indiscreet women are admitted to be instructors and deaconesses, the nature of their office leading them to go from house to house to communicate instruction, to visit the sick, and to perform the offices of religion and humanity, they soon contract a gossiping disposition, and pass their time in idle talk, and impertinent scandal, officiously meddling in the concerns of other people, and imprudently betraying the secrets of families.

14. *I would therefore have the younger widows marry, bear children, manage domestic affairs, give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.*

It is wrong for the younger women to aspire to those offices which require the leisure of a single life, the engagements of which it is often inconvenient to keep, and always disreputable to violate. Let then such persons enter again, if they think fit, into the conjugal state, and fulfill the duties of that honourable relation with discretion and credit, and let them not give occasion to the adversaries of the Christian religion to calumniate its professors, by assuming offices unbecoming their character and time of life.

15. *For some have already turned aside after Satan¹.*

I am thus particular in my advice, because I have already seen instances of the bad consequence of young women intruding into the province of aged matrons; for some, by indiscretion, having forfeited the esteem of the Christian community, have apostatized from the Christian faith, and have returned to their former state of darkness and heathenism.

6. He concludes this subject by urging it upon all Christians, who had it in their power, to support their aged and poor relations, and not suffer them to become a burden to the church, ver. 16.

¹ *After Satan.*] "some have already turned aside from Christianity, and gone among the unbelievers." Benson: see ch. i. 20. "*Secutæ sunt Satanam: i. e. ad idololatriam redierunt.*" Rosenmuller.

If any believer² have relations that are widows, let such support them, and let not the church be burdened, that it may support those that are widows indeed.

Ch. V.
Ver. 16.

I once more request, and indeed require, all persons professing faith in Christ, who have mothers, or other female relations, in a widowed state, to maintain them decently, if it be in their power. And let not the church be burdened with them, when their own families are in circumstances competent to their support. But let the funds of the church remain entire for the use of those widows who are infirm and destitute, and who have no children or other near relations who can do any thing for them. These are the proper objects of public bounty, and of these there will always be a sufficient number whose necessity will require all that can be conveniently spared from the public stock.

SECTION X.

THE APOSTLE gives directions concerning the proper treatment of the elders of the church; he charges Timothy to be very cautious with respect to the characters of those whom he set apart to public offices; and advises him to be careful of his own health. Ch. v. 17—25.

1. The apostle enjoins it as a reasonable thing, as well as a divine precept, that the elders and teachers of the church should have a competent and liberal support, ver. 17, 18.

Let the elders who preside³ well be esteemed worthy of a liberal maintenance⁴, especially those who labour in teaching the word⁵.

17.

² *If any believer.*] εἰ τις πιστός ἢ πιστή, “if any man or woman who believeth.” Newcome.—“*Christianus, aut Christiana.*” Rosenmuller. But it is observable that the apostle cautiously avoids the word *Christian*: which was no doubt given by their enemies at Antioch as a term of reproach, though it is now deservedly held in high estimation. *A Christian is the highest style of man.*

³ *The elders who preside.*] Compare Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24, Rom. xii. 8, 1 Thess. v. 12. The presiding elder appointed the time and place of meeting when the Christians held their assemblies in private, through fear of persecution. They directed public worship; they settled which of the spiritual men were to pray or teach, and in what order; they decided controversies, 1 Cor. vi.; and they managed the temporal affairs of the society.” See Benson and Mac-knight.

⁴ *Liberal maintenance.*] διπλῆς τιμῆς, double honour, or, price. Matt. xxvii. 6. “double re-

Ch. V.
Ver. 17.

Let those grave and experienced persons who are chosen out of the Christian society to superintend its concerns, to appoint the proper seasons of assembling to regulate the order of public services, to manage the temporal affairs of the society, and to compose differences which may arise among its members, and who discharge the duties of their important office with discretion, and to the satisfaction of the church, be supported in decency and comfort from the public stock; and particularly those who are appointed to the honourable office of Christian instructors, and who are so much engaged in teaching the young and the ignorant, and in converting the heathen, that they have not time to attend to their own private concerns. It will be to the credit of the society, and to the furtherance of the gospel, that such persons should be treated with the respect due to their characters and labours; and that they should not be impeded in their work by the want of any thing requisite to their subsistence and comfort, nor taken off from their important employment by a necessary attention to their secular affairs.

18. *For the Scripture saith (Deut. xxv. 4), Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that is treading out the corn; and The labourer is worthy of his hire*¹. Lev. xix. 13. Luke x. 7.

The law of Moses humanely required, that the ox which was employed in treading out the corn should be at liberty to satisfy his own hunger; and it is a common observation, the reasonableness of which is obvious to every understanding, and which indeed was applied by Jesus himself to the very case that I am now stating, that 'the labourer is worthy of his hire,' and that a person who devotes his time and powers to the benefit of others has an equitable claim to a compensation for his services. And nothing can be more

ward." Newcome, Wakefield. See ver. 3: *i. e.* a large reward, Matt. xv. 6, Acts xxviii. 10.—It is an allusion to the portion of the first-born, Deut. xxi. 17. See also 2 Kings ii. 9, a double portion of the spirit of Elijah. "a liberal maintenance out of the public stock." Whitby. "*plus stipendii.*" Rosenmuller.

⁵ *Labour in teaching.*] Literally, "who labour in the word, and in teaching." Newcome.—Some, who presided, did not teach, others were instructors as well as presidents. See Heb. xiii. 7. See Whitby's note. "It was not expected," says Dr. Priestley, "that all the elders of a church should teach; but notwithstanding this, they might be very well employed in attending to the good order of the society. These, however, would not in general require any assistance; but those who actually gave their time and labour to the church, so as to give little or no attention to any other business by which they might maintain themselves, would have a natural right to maintenance from those to whom their time and labour were devoted."

¹ *The labourer, &c.*] This observation occurs only Luke x. 7: hence some have inferred that the apostle quotes the gospel of Luke as of the same authority with the Pentateuch; but this is a precarious conclusion. It was probably a proverbial expression, and cited as such both by our Lord and the apostle. "*Extat quidem locus similis Matt. x. 10. An vero Paulus Evangelium Matthæi legerit valde dubium est.*" Rosenmuller.

absurd or unreasonable than to suppose that the superintendants of Christian churches, and the teachers of the gospel, are not entitled equally with others to a just equivalent for their time and service.

Ch. V.
Ver. 18.

2. The apostle directs Timothy how to act when accusations were brought against any of the elders of the church, ver. 19—21.

Receive not an accusation against an elder, unless on the testimony² of two or three witnesses. 19.

It is of great importance that the characters of those who are appointed to the superintendence of the church, and whose office it is to instruct others in truth and duty, should be unspotted. Having then appointed proper persons to govern and instruct, do not lightly receive a charge against them; and listen not to any reports to their disadvantage, if not confirmed by two or three credible witnesses, upon whose testimony you may safely rely.

Rebuke offenders before all³, that others also may fear. 20.

When you have obtained satisfactory evidence of the misconduct of any of the officers or teachers of the church, let their punishment be proportioned to the enormity of their offence, aggravated as it is by the publicity of their character and the dignity of their office, by the danger of their example, and by the occasion that it will give to the enemies of Christianity to reproach their religion. Rebuke them severely, and rebuke them publicly, not only that they may be made ashamed of their offence, and be brought to a due sense of their guilt, but that others also may see that no elevation of rank, or dignity of office, can protect an offender from deserved censure, and may take warning to avoid a similar conduct, lest they fall into similar disgrace.

² *Unless on the testimony.]* So Doddridge. "without two or three witnesses." Wakefield. "before." Public Version and Newcome. There is no good reason why the accusation should not be received unless in the presence of witnesses, but a very good reason why it should not be attended to unless it could be proved by a competent number of credible witnesses.—"Do not give ear to any thing which may stain their reputation, unless the matter can be attested by two or three credible witnesses: Deut. xix. 15, Matt. xviii. 16, John viii. 17." Benson.

³ *Before all.]* "This was the custom of the synagogue. *Vitrina de vet. Synagog.* p. 729." Benson. The connexion shows that the apostle is speaking of presbyters and officers of the church.—"*quos coram ceteris presbyteris omnibus coarguendos jubet apostolus.*" Rosenmuller.—"This shows," says Dr. Priestley, "how attentive the early Christians were to the good conduct of the members of their societies; and in their situation among unbelievers it was peculiarly necessary, but it is certainly highly proper even in our circumstances. It is a bad symptom of the decline of the spirit of religion, when the members of Christian societies consider themselves as entirely detached from each other, and feel no interest in their good or bad conduct."

Ch. V.
Ver. 21.

I strictly charge thee, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the chosen messengers¹, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality².

The office which I have now assigned thee requires great resolution and fortitude to perform well. But the duties of it are indispensable in the situation in which you are placed, considering the character which you support at Ephesus, and the gifts and powers which you possess; and therefore I strictly charge you, as in the presence of God, the searcher of hearts, and of Jesus Christ, whose minister you are, and at whose judgement seat

¹ *The chosen messengers.*] *ἐκλεκτῶν ἀγγέλων.* The word *angel* is repeatedly used in the New Testament to signify a messenger, Matt. xi. 10, Luke vii. 24. The disciples of John are called *messengers*: in the original, *angels*. Luke ix. 52. The disciples who were sent to announce the approach of Christ are called *messengers*: Gr. “angels.” 1 Cor. xi. 10, the women are required to wear a veil, because of the angels, *i. e. messengers*; who were sent from the assemblies of the men to attend those of the women, and before whom it would be indecorous to appear without a veil. See the note on this passage. James ii. 25, the spies sent by Moses are called *ἄγγελοι*, *messengers*. 1 Tim. iii. 16, he appeared to angels: *i. e. messengers*, to his apostles. See note in *loc.* Gal. i. 14, “ye received me as an angel (*i. e. a messenger*) of God.” The angels of the churches in the first three chapters of the Apocalypse, are universally understood to signify the ministers of the seven churches; and Mr. Wakefield well translates the word *ἄγγελος* in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews *messenger*, explaining it of the former prophets and messengers of God. See Schleusner *in verb.* The elect angels, therefore, are those eminent believers who were selected to accompany and assist the apostle, who knew Timothy’s situation, and who were no doubt very solicitous that he should conduct himself with prudence, firmness, and fidelity, in discharging the duties of his important office. In their presence, therefore, as well as in that of God and Christ, the apostle urges upon his beloved disciple and substitute his solemn charge.

This interpretation, which appears to be so obvious, so intelligible, and so appropriate, seems to have escaped all the commentators, who with one consent interpret the phrase as of spirits superior to mankind; of whose existence even, we have no certain information, much less can we know any thing of their orders and laws, of their offices and employments: who, if they exist at all, and it is indeed probable that millions of orders of intelligent beings exist in the boundless universe, in all probability know as little of what is passing in this diminutive planet, as we know of them. At least, we have no evidence that they know any thing about, or, have any concern with this world and its inhabitants. But that the apostle here refers to these superior classes of beings, appears to have been the opinion of Erasmus, Grotius, Crellius, Slichtingius, Whitby, Benson, Newcome, Wakefield, Rosenmuller, &c. &c. Dr. Priestley himself swims with the stream. “This (says he in his note upon the text) is speaking according to the oriental style; considering God as a great prince, attended by his angels or ministering servants. As acting under the inspection of this great being, thus magnificently attended, Paul gives this solemn charge to Timothy.” The reason of this great and universal mistake appears to be, that the early commentators, conceiving of Jesus Christ as a great super-angelic being, naturally enough imagined that the apostle referred to angels or beings of a superior nature to mankind. But those critics of the present day who entertain more correct views of the person of Christ, will easily discern how much more apposite the expression is, if it be interpreted of those delegates of the churches, who often accompanied the apostle in his journeys, and some of whom probably remained with Timothy, when he was left at Ephesus.

² *Prejudice—partiality.*] See Wakefield.—“without preferring one man before another.” Newcome.—“*προκριμα*, judgement formed before the matter has been duly examined; *προσκλησις*, leaning to one side. Partiality is judgement guided by favour; prejudice is judgement dictated by hatred.” Macknight.

you will be called to give an account of your conduct; and likewise in the presence and with the concurrence of those faithful messengers and preachers of the gospel who have been selected by the church as my associates in labours and in dangers, and who are anxiously solicitous for your credit and success; that you pay due regard to the directions that I have given, and this, without prejudice or personal pique on the one hand, or unbecoming partiality on the other; that you conduct yourself in these circumstances with a firmness and fidelity which becomes the faithful minister of Christ, who has no other concern than to perform his duty without fear or affection, or any improper bias whatever, and without regard to any personal consequences.

Ch. V.
Ver. 21.

3. The apostle gives to Timothy a strict charge to be very careful in inquiring into the characters of those men who might be recommended to public offices, and he introduces a friendly hint to take care of his own health, ver. 22—25.

Put thy hands³ on no man precipitately, and be not a partaker in the sins of others. Keep thyself pure.

22.

As it is better to prevent offences than to punish them, I advise you to be extremely circumspect with regard to the characters of those who are recommended to offices of dignity and importance in the church. When any are selected by their fellow-Christians, and presented to you for approbation and confirmation in the office of elder or deacon, by imposition of hands and prayer, first inquire diligently into their moral conduct, and do not, by hastily introducing into office persons of doubtful character, render yourself in a considerable degree chargeable with the evil consequences which will inevitably follow, if men of mean abilities and immoral lives are made rulers and teachers in the church. Let your whole conduct in this, and in all respects, be spotless and free from reproach.

Do not any longer drink water only, but use a little wine, for the sake of thy stomach and thy frequent infirmities⁴.

23.

³ *Put thy hands.*] Dr. Macknight observes, that "this is one instance among others that in the apostolic age men were ordained to ecclesiastical functions by imposition of the hands of those who were in the ministry before them."

⁴ *Do not, &c.*] Sir Norton Knatchbull thinks, that as this verse interrupts the sense, it was introduced by the apostle as a postscript in the margin, and by some officious transcriber inserted into the text. See Doddridge, and Bowyer's *Conjectural Emendations*. Some think that the apostle gently reproves Timothy as too much addicted to an ascetic life.

Ch. V.
Ver. 23.

Having hinted at your personal duty, it reminds me of observing, that one important duty is, to take care of your health, without which it is impossible for you to go through the fatigues of your office; and, that you may not exhaust yourself by your exertions, I advise you to indulge yourself in the moderate use of wine, and not to drink water only.

24. *The sins of some men¹ are notorious, leading on to condemnation, whereas the sins of others follow them.*

But to return to the subject of appointing persons to ecclesiastical offices; I would observe, that it is not always easy to discern the real characters of men. Some persons are notorious offenders, whom it may be hoped that the church would never elect; and whom, if they were presented, you would immediately reject, as men whose characters allowed no room for hesitation. But there are others, whose vices are concealed, whose real characters it is difficult to detect, in whom, after the greatest circumspection you can use, you may be deceived, and whose crimes may perhaps not be completely developed till the final judgement. If you should happen after due inquiry to institute such persons into the office of teachers and preachers of the gospel, whatever injury the church may sustain, your conscience will be clear.

25. *So also the good works of some are manifest, and those that are otherwise cannot be concealed.*

The same observation may be applied to persons of an opposite character. Some are eminently virtuous; their piety, their benevolence, their habitual regard to God and duty are so conspicuous, that calumny itself cannot fasten any scandal and reproach upon them. In others, equally animated by a principle of rectitude, their virtues are less conspicuous, they live in the obscurity of retirement, or they studiously conceal from human eyes the good they do. Such virtue, however, cannot be wholly or long concealed. By diligent inquiry you may perhaps find them out, and advance them to those posts of dignity and importance to which their merit entitles them, but from which their modesty and humility would keep them at a distance. At all events, how little soever their merits may be known

¹ *The sins of some men.*] See ver. 22. *q. d.* "In setting men apart to the ministry, you may be deceived without guilt. The sins of some are manifest before the final judgement; but others so conceal them that they will not appear till the sentence of their judge." Newcome. I rather prefer the interpretation of Doddridge: "leading on to pass judgement on them without any difficulty." Dr. Benson gives a similar paraphrase.

and acknowledged in the present state, they will not fail to be brought to light and crowned with honour in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and all shall be rewarded according to their works. Ch. V.
Ver. 25.

SECTION XI.

THE APOSTLE requires that Christian slaves be taught to yield due obedience to their masters, and animadverts with great severity upon those false teachers who, from mercenary views, taught a different doctrine. Ch. VI.
Ch. vi. 1—10.

1. He requires that slaves be instructed to yield obedience to their masters, and by no means to fail in due respect to those of them who were converted to the Christian faith. Ch. vi. 1, 2.

Let all who are under the yoke of servitude² esteem their masters worthy of all honour; that the name of God and his doctrine may not be calumniated³. Ver. 1.

Many of the zealots for the law, in order to ingratiate themselves with, and to make gain of, their proselytes, represent Christian slaves as released by the profession of the Christian religion from all obligation to serve Christian masters. But do you, Timothy, teach a different doctrine, and let it be known that Christianity makes no change in men's civil relations; but as it requires humanity on the part of the master, it equally enjoins obedience and fidelity on the part of the slave. I require that this doctrine should be inculcated upon Christian slaves; and that they should be taught to regard it as an indispensable duty to serve their masters with honesty and zeal: that

² *Let all who are under the yoke of servitude.*] Literally, "as many slaves as are under the yoke." See Newcome. It was a doctrine of the pharisaic Jews, that proselytes were released from all antecedent civil and even natural relations. And it is not improbable that some of the Jewish converts might carry the same principle into the Christian community. The Judaizing zealots probably taught, that by the profession of Christianity slaves were emancipated from Christian masters. Against this principle the apostle always enters his strong protest; and teaches that the profession of Christianity makes no difference in the civil relations of men. 1 Cor. vii. 17—24. The apostle no doubt well knew that the principles of genuine Christianity would eventually lead to the utter extermination of slavery; but the process was to be voluntary and gradual, not violent and immediate. See Benson, Macknight, Priestley, &c.

³ *Calumniated.*] "evil spoken of. As if it set men free from civil obligations." Newcome.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 1.

so the doctrine which God has revealed for the universal reception and salvation of mankind, may not be misrepresented and calumniated, as introducing disorder and confusion into civil society.

2. *And let not those who have believing masters think lightly of them, because they are brethren¹, but serve them the more willingly, because those who are partakers of the benefit² are believers and beloved.*

Neither let Christian slaves imagine that their masters, though Christians, are under any obligation to restore them to liberty; or that because they are equally members of the great family of believers, possessed of the same privileges, heirs of the same eternal inheritance, they are for this reason released from civil subjection, and are entitled to treat their masters with neglect and contempt. Let Christian slaves therefore be as prompt in their obedience to the orders of Christian as of heathen masters. And indeed let the consideration, that the masters whom they serve, and who are benefited by their industry, are believers in Christ, and beloved of God, and that they are bound by the Christian law to treat those under their authority with humanity and brotherly kindness, be an additional motive to still greater alacrity and zeal in the performance of duty.

2. The apostle expresses great displeasure at those who taught a contrary doctrine, ver. 3—5.

- 2, 3. *These things teach and exhort. If any one teach otherwise, and adhere not³ to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine*

¹ *Brethren.*] “Though brethren, and upon a level with their slaves in a religious account, they remain superior, and just as they were in a civil and temporal account. See note on Philémon, ver. 12, 14, 16.” Benson.

² *Partakers of the benefit:*] *i. e.* of the service of the slave. See Benson, Newcome, and Macknight. Dr. Benson observes, that “*εὐεργεσία* is a word never used to express the blessings of the gospel.” The public version is, “because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit:” *q. d.* do them service, the rather because they are partakers of the blessing of the gospel, in common with you their slaves. This also is the sense given in Mr. Wakefield’s translation, “but serve them, as believers and beloved, partakers of the same benefit, with a more hearty service.” But Dr. Benson’s interpretation seems preferable.

³ *Adhere not.*] *προσερχεται*, “consent not.” Public Version. “attend not.” Wakefield.—Dr. Bentley conjectures that the true reading was probably *προσεχεται*, or *προσεχει*, as *προσεχειν λογους* is a known phrase both in sacred and profane writers: see 2 Pet. i. 19; Acts viii. 6, xvi. 4; Heb. ii. 1; Tit. i. 14; 1 Tim. i. 3, 4: whereas there is no precedent of a similar application of *προσερχομαι*. And he conjectures that some manuscript may possibly be found which contains this reading. See *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, part i., p. 72, and Benson *in loc.* No such manuscript, however, has yet been discovered: nevertheless, the conjecture is so probable, that it is mentioned by Griesbach in his second edition; and has been adopted expressly by Benson and Doddridge, and virtually by Archbishop Newcome. Nor does there appear to be any valid reason why conjectural criticism should not occasionally be applied to the sacred

which is according to godliness, he is vain⁴, and knoweth nothing, but is raving⁵ about questions and verbal disputes⁶. From which arise envy, contention, calumnies, unjust suspicions, perverse debates⁷ of men whose minds are corrupted and adverse to the truth, who regard gain as piety⁸.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 4.
5.

This doctrine, concerning the duties of slaves, I require you to teach and inculcate upon all of that description who embrace the faith of Christ; and exhort them to behave accordingly. And do not suffer any to be seduced into a profession of Christianity by the false expectation that they shall thereby be released from their present degraded condition in society. If any person teach a doctrine contrary to this, if the zealot for the law artfully preaches up the immediate emancipation of Christian slaves, and thus departs from that wise and salutary doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of true and rational religion, which, not interfering with the civil states of men, is calculated gradually to ameliorate their condition, by infusing milder principles and gentler habits, both into individuals and communities; if any man, I say, thus departs from the true doctrine and the genuine law of Christ, he is chargeable with a very criminal degree of vanity and self-conceit, in presuming to set up his own erroneous opinions in opposition to the truth of the gospel; he discovers a deplorable ignorance of the true genius and spirit of the Christian religion. If he is in earnest, he must be out of his mind; he raves like a man in the delirium of fever, who is utterly incapable of

writings, as it is allowed to be to profane authors; for it is not to be supposed that all transcribers and copyists were inspired. It ought, however, to be very cautiously applied to texts which are of weight in theological controversy. See John i. 1, Rom. ix. 5, and the notes in the *Improved Version*. Rosenmuller denies the necessity of adopting Bentley's conjecture, and appeals to Philo as using the phrase *προσελθεῖν τινι γνώμῃ*, for acceding to an opinion. And Schleusner refers to Munthe's *Obs. Philolog. e Diod. Sic.* for a similar authority: but no example of this use of the word has been produced out of the New Testament or the Septuagint.

⁴ *He is vain.*] *τετυφωται*. "he is besotted." Wakefield, 2d edit. He once approved of the reading in the Æthiopic Version, *τετυφλωται*, *he is blind*; but upon further consideration gave it up. It is a reading supported by one manuscript only, and that of no great account.

⁵ *Raving.*] *νοσων*, "raving and delirious in a fever." Doddridge; who observes, that the word expresses the effect of a disease on the mind, in which view *raving* appears a more proper word than *doting*. "he is sick of the wrangling disease." Bishop Wilkins's *Sermons*, p. 73.

⁶ *Questions and verbal disputes.*] "The Greek may be resolved into *ζητήσεις και μαχας περι λογων*. Perhaps questions were raised concerning the extent of liberty under the gospel. The apostle treats the subject with warmth, because some had maintained opinions about it which caused the religion of Christ to be evil-spoken of." Newcome.

⁷ *Perverse debates.*] "*διατριβαι* are disputes in the philosophical schools; *διαπαράτριβαι* are perverse disputes." Macknight. See also Rosenmuller.

⁸ *Gain as piety.*] *ευσεβειαν*. See ch. iii. 16. At the end of this verse the received text adds, "*αφισασο απο των τοιςτων*, *from such turn away*." This clause is omitted in the Alexandrine, Cambridge, and other manuscripts, and in many ancient versions, and is not necessary to the sense. See Griesbach, who nevertheless retains it in the text. Newcome marks it as doubtful.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 5.

forming a deliberate judgement; and introduces ferocious disputes about words that have no meaning. The consequences of this haughty and disputatious spirit are very pernicious; it gives rise to envy and strife, to the use of harsh and abusive language concerning those who differ in opinion, and to unjust suspicions of their sincerity, because they will not submit to the decision of these self-constituted instructors. Such a conduct likewise gives occasion to pernicious debates among men of corrupt minds, who are not desirous of discovering and diffusing truth, but who endeavour by sophistical reasonings to blind the understandings of others, and who have no regard whatever for religion, any further than as it is the means of enriching themselves.

3. The apostle represents the folly of an excessive eagerness after unlawful gain, ver. 6—8.

6. *But piety with a sufficiency¹ is great gain.*

The belief of the Christian religion, and a title to its invaluable blessings, is the greatest treasure that a man can possess; and if, in addition to this, he acquires a decent competence of the blessings of life, he has reason to regard himself as possessing every thing that a wise man can desire.

7. *For we brought nothing into the world, and it is evident that we can carry*
8. *nothing out. Having therefore food and covering², let us be content with these.*

We come into the world in a naked and destitute condition, and in a short time we must leave it in as naked and destitute a state as we came into it. It is therefore great folly to indulge unreasonable anxiety with regard to the accommodations we shall possess during our short transitory residence here, and much more to use any dishonourable means of improving our condition. It is far more becoming to be content and thankful for what little we may possess: and if we are supplied by the good providence of God with decent apparel, with convenient habitations, and with plain and wholesome food, with this provision we ought to be content and thankful.

¹ *Sufficiency.*] *αυταρκειας*. So Diodati, Macknight; Wakefield, who observes, that what follows justifies this translation. See 2 Cor. ix. 8. *Piety* (*ευσεβεια*) here, as in the preceding verse, stands for the whole of religion. See ch. iii. 16.

² *Covering.*] “*σκεπασματα*” this word expresses clothes, lodging, and covering of every sort.” Macknight, Wakefield.—“*Σκ. sunt tegumenta, domus, tecta, æque ac vestes.*” Rosenmüller.

4. The apostle further represents the pernicious consequences of a covetous temper, especially in those who profess to be teachers of the gospel, ver. 9, 10. Ch. VI.

But they who are determined to be rich³ fall into the temptation and snare of many senseless and mischievous desires⁴, which plunge men into ruin and destruction. Ver. 9.

The men whose sole aim it is to acquire wealth, and who are willing to sacrifice every thing to this mean and unworthy pursuit, may perhaps attain their wish: but in the prosecution of their purpose they will expose themselves to many temptations to violate the rules of justice and integrity, and in the possession of their object they will be tempted to indulge in those licentious gratifications to which great opulence furnishes so easy access, and which will eventually overwhelm them in disgrace and destruction.

For the love of money is the root of all mischief; which some⁵ having vehemently coveted, have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through⁶ with many sorrows. 10.

Where the love of gain is the predominant principle, the ruling passion in the breast, it is impossible to enumerate all the mischiefs which result from it. Where this sordid passion takes possession of the teachers of the Christian religion, it leads them to sacrifice the genuine truths of the gospel to the prejudices of their hearers; and to teach what they know to be false, because they find it profitable. This, though it wears the semblance of wisdom, will be found eventually to have been the greatest folly. For sooner or later they will be roused to a sense of their guilt; and the reproaches of their consciences, like the wounds of a dagger, will fill their hearts with insupportable anguish and dismay.

³ *Determined to be rich.*] “resolved to be rich at all adventures.” Benson; who remarks in his note, “That this was peculiarly levelled at the false teachers, the whole strain of the apostle’s discourse is a proof.” Compare ver. 5, 10, 11.

⁴ *Into the temptation, &c.*] For this construction see Wakefield.

⁵ *Which some, &c.*] “Observe that ης, attracted by φιλαργυρίας, agrees in sense with αργυρίᾱ, contained in φιλαργυρίας.” Newcome.

⁶ *Pierced themselves through.*] περιεπειραν. “π. undiquaque infigo et perforo; ex περι undiquaque, et περιω transfigo.” Schleusner. “stabbed themselves from head to foot, so as to be pierced through and through.” Macknight; Doddridge, who observes, “that this happily expresses the innumerable outrages done to conscience by those madmen who have taken up this fatal resolution, that they will at all adventures be rich.”

SECTION XII.

Ch. VI. *THE APOSTLE solemnly charges Timothy to be faithful and courageous in discharging his office; he advises him to remind the rich of their peculiar duties; he again renews his charge of fidelity, and concludes the epistle with commending him to the divine blessing. Ch. vi. 11—22.*

1. The apostle warns Timothy to avoid the evil practices of the false teachers, and exhorts him to attend to every branch of duty, ver. 11, 12.

11. *But do thou, O man of God¹, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, piety, fidelity, love, patience, meekness.*

I have faithfully represented to you the extreme danger of an eager attachment to riches, especially in a minister of the gospel; and now I solemnly charge you, O Timothy, as one who sustains a sacred character, and who has not only been solemnly set apart to the office of the ministry, but furnished with supernatural qualifications for the discharge of it, to avoid every appearance of a mean and mercenary spirit. Practise universal virtue, live in the fear and love of God, adhere to truth in your declarations, and be faithful to your promises; cultivate universal active benevolence, bear with patience affliction and persecution, and cherish a forbearing and forgiving spirit.

12. *Maintain the honourable contest of faith², lay hold on eternal life, to which thou hast been invited, and hast confessed³ a good confession before many witnesses.*

Though I earnestly recommend meekness and forbearance, I am far from desiring you to desert the cause of truth; on the contrary, contend earnestly for the purity of the faith, and do not yield in any point to those who would corrupt the simplicity of the gospel by the introduction either of Jewish

¹ *O man of God:]* i. e. "minister of Christ. See 2 Tim. iii. 17." Newcome. "*Man of God* signifies an inspired person or prophet. 2 Pet. iii. 21." Benson.

² *Maintain, &c.]* Dr. Benson observes, "This is not an allusion to the life of a soldier engaged in wars and battles, but to the contentions in the Grecian games; which is a common allusion with St. Paul. 1 Cor. ix. 24—27, Phil. iii. 12—14, 2 Tim. iii. 5. See West's *Dissertation on the Olympic Games.*"

³ *And hast confessed.]* ὡμολογησας. Macknight says, that the aorist has the force of an imperative, and renders it "confess a good confession."

rites, or mysterious philosophical speculations. Persist with undaunted resolution in this honourable contest, and thus secure your title to eternal life. This is the glorious prize for which you have been invited to contend; and as you have in many instances made a noble and a public stand in defence of truth, I trust that your future conduct will not disgrace your past transactions, nor sully the reputation you have already acquired.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 12.

2. He enforces the charge by reminding the evangelist of the approaching judgement, ver. 13—16.

In the presence of God⁴, who giveth life to all, and of Jesus Christ⁵, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, I charge thee that thou keep this commandment unspotted, unblameable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ⁶.

13.

14.

So deeply am I impressed with the importance of the charge which I have now given you, of maintaining a temperate yet firm adherence to Christian truth, that I would urge it upon you by every consideration that can interest your feelings or excite your attention. In the presence of God, of that God from whom all derive their existence, by whose power the virtuous will be raised to immortality, and who can, and will, infinitely compensate to all his faithful servants every sacrifice which they can make in the cause of truth and duty; and in the presence of Jesus Christ, our glorious chief, from whom both you and I received our commission, who himself exhibited an eminent example of firm and undaunted fidelity, when in the presence of the Roman governor he boldly avowed the important truth, that he was born to reign (John xviii. 37), which he knew would be immediately followed by a sen-

⁴ *In the presence of God.*] Dr. Benson supposes, that in ch. v. 21 there is an allusion to the splendour and magnificence of the Persian court, and the same allusion is resumed in this text; but, for the reasons assigned in the note upon the former passage, the supposition seems to be needless and unsupported, both there and here.

⁵ *And of Jesus Christ.*] There appears to have been a peculiar personal presence of Christ with his church, and especially with the apostles, and with Paul in particular, during the apostolic age, which since that time has been withdrawn, at least in its sensible manifestations; to which presence the apostle here alludes. Indeed the apostle always appears to speak and act as if Jesus were personally present with him. See 2 Cor. xii. 8—10, Matt. xxviii. 20, and the *Improved Version*, and Bishop Pearce on the text. Also Mr. Lindsey's *Sequel to his Apology*, p. 74.

⁶ *Until the appearing.*] Grotius observes, that the apostle expresses himself as though he thought it possible that Timothy might live till Christ's second appearance; and refers to his own notes upon 1 Cor. xv. 52, 2 Cor. v. 2, 3, 1 Thess. iv. 15. So Rosenmüller: "*Loquitur Paulus ad Timotheum tanquam qui vivere posset ad tempus, quo Christus ad judicium venturus esset.*"

Ch. VI.
Ver. 14.

tence of crucifixion, I now most solemnly charge and enjoin, that you preserve the truth of the Christian doctrine without any stain of error in principle, without any reproach of immorality in conduct, as long as you live, and as far as lies in your power, till the day of the second appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, to raise the dead and to judge the world: when fidelity tried and approved shall receive an ample reward.

15. *Which in its proper season he will exhibit, who is the blessed and the*
16. *only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone hath immortality, inhabiting inaccessible light, whom no man hath seen, or can see¹, to whom be everlasting honour and dominion². Amen.*

To this awful and magnificent appearance of our divine master we look forward with joyful expectation, though concerning the precise period of its arrival we may be left in ignorance. Nevertheless, we are assured that it will be brought to pass, at the destined and the fittest season, by that omnipotent Being who alone possesses essential power, whose infinite happiness is a proof and pledge of the ultimate felicity of the whole rational creation, whose throne is highly exalted above all earthly potentates, all created authorities and powers, from whom all beings derive their existence, their percipient and active faculties, and all the shadow of dignity and authority which they possess; who is indeed the only proper agent in the universe, governing and disposing all things by his own wise, benevolent, and sovereign will; who alone possesses in his own essence immutable immortal life, and who alone can communicate immortality and happiness to whomsoever he pleases; whose nature and attributes are absolutely incomprehensible, and will ever remain unknown to the most exalted and capacious of created intelligences, to whom belongs universal dominion, and to whom be ascribed everlasting honour. Amen.

3. The apostle desires that Timothy would remind the rich of their important duties, ver. 17—19.

17. *Them that are rich in this world charge³ that they be not elated in mind,*

¹ *Light inaccessible, &c.]* Dr. Benson very probably conjectures that there is an allusion here to the *shechinah* or cloud of glory upon the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies, to which no one had access but the high-priest.—“*Lucem inaccessam inhabitans: sensus est, cujus majestatem nemo comprehendere mente potest.*” Rosenmuller.

² *Everlasting dominion.]* “*qui summo honore est dignus, et cujus imperium est æternum. κραισσεως sæpe est imperium. Vid. Hesychium.*” Rosenmuller.

³ *Charge, &c.]* Dr. Benson observes, that “Timothy might perhaps be afraid to insist upon such things from those who by their riches were persons of some distinction, and therefore the

that they do not trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God⁴, who richly giveth us all things to enjoy. Ch. VI. Ver. 17.

Though not many in the superior ranks of life can be induced to embrace the humble and despised religion of Jesus, yet as there are some of this description at Ephesus, it is right that they should be informed of the duties which our holy religion enjoins. Charge them therefore not to think too highly of themselves on account of their wealth, not to place their confidence in that which is so little able to afford true satisfaction, and which may vanish from them before they are aware, and when they flatter themselves that they are most secure. But let them learn to put their trust, not in senseless idols, but in that God who lives from everlasting to everlasting, and who is the fountain of life and happiness; who is kind and liberal to all his human offspring, and from whom we all derive the blessings and comforts that we possess.

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. 18.

Charge them further to make a good use of their wealth, to abound in acts of kindness, to employ their riches in honourable and useful undertakings, to impart liberally to those who are in want, to concur cheerfully in every pious and benevolent design, and to contribute generously towards carrying it into execution.

Laying up in store for themselves a good security⁵ against the time to come, that they may obtain that which is the true life⁶. 19.

Tell them that, by employing their wealth to the purposes of beneficence,

apostle interposes his authority. "And it has been remarked that this advice to the rich clearly proves that there was no community of goods at Ephesus." See Doddridge.

⁴ *The living God.*] "not in Diana, nor any other of the heathen gods made and provided for by mankind." Benson

⁵ *A good security.*] Gr. *θεμελιον*, "foundation." Le Clerc proposes *καιμηλιον*, a treasure: but for this there is no authority. *Θεμα* occurs Tobit iv. 9, "by almsgiving thou treasurest up to thyself a good deposit." "a good provision." Wakefield.—Archbishop Tillotson (*Sermons*, fol. vol. i. serm. 7,) observes, that *θεμελιος* "is sometimes used for an instrument of contract, whereby two parties do oblige themselves mutually to each other."—"Omne notat, quod certum est, nec facile perit." Schleusner. In this sense the word seems to be used 2 Tim. ii. 19; and this, as Dr. Benson observes in his judicious note upon that text, "affords the most satisfactory interpretation here. For if *θεμελιος* signifies a bond or article of security for some future glorious possession, then treasuring it up will be easily understood. But 'treasuring up a foundation' sounds oddly, and is not easy to be understood." "*Durius paullo: q. d. cumulantes divitias perpetuo duraturas.*" Rosenmuller.

⁶ *The true life.*] The received text reads *αιωνις*, eternal, but the best copies read *οντως*, which is adopted by Griesbach and Newcome.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 19.

and in promoting the interest of truth and virtue, they are laying out their riches to the best account, they are treasuring up for themselves an inexhaustible store of that most valuable of all possessions, peace of mind, pleasing reflections, and joyful hopes; and thus, that they will not only ensure the truest enjoyment of the present transitory state of existence, but will acquire a title to that glorious inheritance which is revealed by Christ, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and will never fade away, and which alone deserves the name of a true, substantial and happy life.

4. The apostle renews the solemn charge of fidelity to his trust, and concludes the epistle with recommending the evangelist to the divine blessing, ver. 20, 21.

20. *O Timothy! guard thy deposit¹; avoiding profane babblings² and opposi-*
21. *tions of science, falsely so called; which some pretending to, have erred concerning the faith. The favour of God³ be with thee. Amen.*

O Timothy! my pupil, my son in the true faith, and my representative in office, I conclude this long epistle with the solemn charge, that you will with the utmost care, resolution and perseverance, preserve pure and uncorrupted that sublime and holy doctrine which is committed to thy trust, of which trust thou must hereafter give an account. Avoid with the utmost circumspection, on the one hand, those Jewish innovations which would impose the rites of Moses upon the disciples of Christ, and encroach upon the liberties of the Gentile church; and, on the other, guard against those abstruse speculations of heathen philosophy, which, being hostile to the simplicity of the gospel doctrine, would introduce mysterious and unintelligible notions to recommend Christianity to those pretenders to science who cannot be satisfied with a system which common people can comprehend. This is a snare in which some of

¹ Thy deposit.] "the doctrine that is committed to thy trust." Newcome. Dr. Benson observes, that "the apostle has kept this point in view through the whole epistle, and now sums it up at parting."

² Profane babblings.] *κενοφωνίας*, "f. *καινοφωνίας*, profane new-coined words, as, Vulg. *Vocum novitates*. Chrysostom, Tertullian, et al. in Wetstein." Bowyer.

³ The favour of God.] So Newcome supplies the ellipsis. "*Nempe Dei Patris et Christi.*" Rosenmüller.

The Postscript dates the epistle from Laodicea the metropolis of Phrygia Pacatiana; and some copies, from Athens. These postscripts are of no authority, and are wanting in the best manuscripts; but they at least show the early prevalence of an opinion that the Epistle was not written from Macedonia: and consequently an early different reading of ch. i. 3.

the teachers of the gospel have been already entangled, and while they have involved themselves in the subtleties of useless science, they have deviated from the simplicity of the Christian faith.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 21.

Being thus faithfully warned, keep strictly upon the watch against those corruptions of the Christian doctrine; adhere steadily to the simplicity of evangelical truth; and may you enjoy in their highest purity the blessings of that gospel, which is the free and inestimable gift of God by Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE SECOND EPISTLE

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS

THE Second Epistle to Timothy is one of those apostolic writings concerning the genuineness and authenticity of which there has never been any dispute. It is certain, that it was written from Rome, while the apostle was a prisoner there; but a question has arisen, whether this epistle was written during the apostle's first or second imprisonment; and likewise, whether Timothy at that time resided at Ephesus, or at some other place. It is the current tradition of antiquity, that Paul was imprisoned at Rome twice. The first time was about A.D. 61, when he was sent thither by Nero after his appeal to Caesar, of which an account is given in the history of the Acts of the Apostles. At that time Luke was his companion; and the apostle, after he had obtained a hearing before the emperor, was permitted to reside two years in his own house, under the guard of a soldier. Here Luke's history closes; but the tradition of antiquity is, that after he had obtained his liberty, he visited the churches which he had planted in

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Greece and Asia, after which he returned again to Rome, where having converted the emperor's cupbearer, he was by Nero's order seized and put to death. This event is commonly believed to have taken place nearly at the same time when that profligate prince excited a cruel persecution against the Christians under pretence that they had set fire to the city, and in order to screen himself from the charge¹.

The apostle writes to his friend, ch. iv. 8: "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course." From these strong expressions, which appear to indicate an expectation of speedy dissolution, many have inferred that this is the last epistle which the apostle wrote, and that it must have been indited a very short time before his death. But that this conclusion is unfounded, is evident from other passages in the epistle, which plainly indicate the apostle's expectation of the further prolongation of his life and labours. "Do thy diligence," says he, ver. 21, "to come to me before winter: The cloak, or portmanteau, which I left at Troas with Carpus, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments, ver. 13. Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry," ver. 11. These directions clearly prove that the apostle expected to live till Timothy and Mark could come, and that he should make use of the articles which Timothy was desired to bring. Also, that he should employ the two evangelists as his coadjutors in the Christian ministry at Rome, which is evidently inconsistent with the expectation of immediate martyrdom, and likewise with the probable situation of the apostle in his supposed second imprisonment. The apostle therefore seems to have intended nothing more by the expressions above mentioned than that he was now advanced in years, and that his season of active service was almost over. He might also be apprehensive that he should remain a prisoner for life; and that, though he was for the present relieved, and it might be some time before he was summoned to appear again at the imperial tribunal, the issue of his second appearance would be fatal².

Upon the whole, therefore, the opinion concerning the date of this epistle which was held by Dr. Lardner and many other learned men appears to me

¹ See Lardner's *History of the Apostles and Evangelists*, ch. xi. *ad fin.*

² This is the more probable, as it is certain that appearances were judged to have been very unfavourable when he was summoned to make his first defence, 2 Tim. iv. 16. And towards the close of his first imprisonment, when upon the whole he expected to be released, yet he appears to have been not without some apprehensions of a contrary issue. See Phil. i. 20—25, ii. 17, 23, 24.

the most probable: viz. that it was written in the spring of A.D. 61, near the commencement of the apostle's first imprisonment³, and soon after he had obtained an audience of Nero; in consequence of which he was permitted to reside in a house of his own, to which all his friends had liberty of access. In confirmation of this supposition it may be remarked, that it appears from ch. iv. 11, that Luke was with him when he wrote this epistle; and though we are sure that this evangelist accompanied him in his first imprisonment, we have no evidence whatever that he was with him when he returned to Rome. Also, ch. iii. 11, the apostle reminds Timothy of his persecutions at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, but makes no allusion to his former imprisonment at Rome, which he could hardly have failed to have done, had this epistle been written during his second confinement there. It cannot be doubted that Timothy hastened to Rome immediately upon the receipt of this letter; and this circumstance will account for the mention of his name, together with that of the apostle, in the epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon; these epistles having been written a short time before his release from his first imprisonment. Mark having also accompanied Timothy, and remaining with the apostle, his name occurs in the salutation to Philemon, ver. 24. Demas, who when the apostle wrote to Timothy, ch. iv. 10, had forsaken him probably through fear of persecution, and was gone to Thessalonica, appears afterwards to have recovered his courage, and to have returned to the apostle, who mentions him with honour in the Epistle to Philemon, as his fellow-labourer.

³ The principal authorities in favour of this date of the epistle are Lightfoot, Baronius, Estius, Hammond, Witsius, Grotius, Rosenmuller, Lardner, and Priestley. On the other side are Whitby, Doddridge, Benson, Macknight, and Paley. The arguments upon which the advocates for a later date of the epistle lay the principal stress are, 1.) The strong language of the apostle, ch. iv. 6—8. 2.) The apostle does not, as in his other epistles, express any expectation of release; but, ch. iv. 18, only that the Lord would deliver him from every evil work, and preserve him to his heavenly kingdom. But if this epistle was written at the beginning of the imprisonment, he might be very doubtful of its issue. 3.) Ch. iv. 20, Erastus abode at Corinth. What need was there to inform Timothy of this, who was with him when he left Corinth? Acts xx., and must have known that Erastus staid behind. 4.) Ibid. Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. Trophimus was with Paul at Miletus, and accompanied him to Jerusalem, Acts xx. Ans. Beza and Grotius for *Miletum* are inclined to read *Melita*; but Lightfoot and Lardner rather infer from Acts xxvii. 2, 7, that the ship in which Paul was, touched at Miletus. But surely in this case Timothy would have met the apostle at Miletus, or at least he must have heard of Trophimus long before Paul wrote. Upon the whole, though the two last objections may not be easily obviated, the evidence appears to preponderate greatly in favour of the epistle having been written during the first imprisonment. In fact, as Lardner observes, we have no evidence of his ever being imprisoned a second time; and least of all, that he would be allowed time to write and to receive an answer to his letter. If the apostle had been arrested during the rage of Nero's persecution, he would have been almost immediately put to death.

It is highly probable that Timothy was at Ephesus when he received this letter. The apostle sends his salutations to the family of Onesiphorus, who resided at Ephesus, and to Prisca and Aquila, who appear to have fixed their abode in that city. He desires Timothy to bring with him the articles which he had left at Troas, which, though not directly in his way from Ephesus, was nevertheless the route which the apostle had taken in passing into Greece, and was probably the common route of those who wished to shorten the passage by sea. He warns Timothy against the errors of Hymeneus, and the malignity of Alexander, both of whom he mentions with disapprobation in his first epistle, which was unquestionably sent to Timothy at Ephesus. It is presumed that this evangelist took leave of the apostle at Miletus in his way to Jerusalem, no further mention being made of him in the history, and that he returned with the elders to Ephesus, where he remained till the apostle sent this letter inviting him to Rome.

The main design of the apostle in this epistle is to fortify the mind of the evangelist against those discouraging apprehensions which the sufferings and persecutions of the first teachers of the gospel might naturally excite: to raise him above the sense of shame and fear in the cause of truth, and to animate him to a resolute and faithful discharge of the duties of his office by his own example, by the example of Christ, and by the prospect of a future retribution.

FIRST. The apostle, after a suitable INTRODUCTION, expresses his great tenderness for the evangelist, and his earnest desire of an interview with him. Ch. i. 1—5.

SECONDLY. He urges Timothy to firmness and fidelity, and exhorts him not to be ashamed of visiting him in his confinement, which was indeed his honour, not his disgrace; he expresses much disapprobation of the conduct of some who had deserted him in his sufferings, and highly applauds the zeal and affection of Onesiphorus, who had visited and succoured him in his confinement, ver. 6—18.

THIRDLY. The apostle earnestly exhorts his friend to be a faithful and assiduous teacher of the gospel, and to make up his mind to incur all dangers, and to endure all hardships and fatigues, with a view to the glorious recompense promised by the gospel, and encourages him by his own example. Ch. ii. 1—13.

FOURTHLY. The apostle requires Timothy to charge his hearers not to lose time in discussing unprofitable questions, and especially not to give countenance to antichristian errors, which, if they do not exclude from salvation, at least tarnish the character. He urges him to the practice of virtue, to decline trifling discussions, and to communicate instruction in a familiar and impressive manner, ver. 14—26.

FIFTHLY. The apostle warns the evangelist of the corrupt doctrines and practices of the latter days, which will assuredly terminate in the confusion and ruin of their authors and abettors. Ch. iii. 1—9.

SIXTHLY. He solemnly charges Timothy to adhere faithfully to the doctrine in which he had been instructed by himself, which was confirmed by the Jewish scriptures, with which the evangelist was familiar, which had been the constant theme of the apostle's discourses, and for the sake of which, as Timothy well knew, he had often endured cruel persecution, ver. 10—17.

SEVENTHLY. The apostle, under a deep impression that the season of life and active usefulness was near a close, solemnly charges the evangelist to be resolute, diligent, and faithful, in preaching the pure uncorrupted doctrine of the gospel. Ch. iv. 1—8.

EIGHTHLY. He urges Timothy to come to him immediately, states his reason for it, complains of the desertion of some of his companions, represents his danger, and expresses his confidence in God. He gives some directions and commissions for the evangelist to execute in his way, mentions some interesting incidents, repeats his injunction to come to Rome, and concludes with salutations and the apostolical benediction, ver. 9—22.

This epistle has been justly regarded as containing within itself, a satisfactory evidence of the truth and divine authority of the Christian religion. The apostle Paul, one of its most zealous and active teachers, at the close of life, persecuted by his enemies, deserted by his friends, in the midst of a long imprisonment, and in the near prospect of a violent death, writing a confidential letter to an intimate friend, a favourite pupil, whom he had trained up to the ministry, who had been the faithful associate of his labours and his persecutions, and to whom he looked as the chief instrument under Divine Providence of carrying on the great cause in which he was embarked, in which he had laboured, and for which he suffered; in these critical circumstances, far from expressing any suspicion of the justice of his cause, of the truth of his doctrine, and the propriety of his conduct; far from re-

greeting the sacrifices which he had made, the labours that he had undergone, and the sufferings which he had endured, in the promulgation of the Christian doctrine, and in fulfilling the duties of the apostolic office, he every where adopts the language of joy and exultation, and earnestly exhorts his friend and associate to persevere with alacrity in the same honourable course, even though it would probably lead to a catastrophe similar to his own. This unparalleled fortitude, this holy triumph, this joyful exultation, is utterly inconsistent with the supposition of hypocrisy, of imposture, of artifice and intention to deceive. It is the genuine language of the heart; it is the natural expression of a firm conviction of the truth and importance of the doctrine which he taught, and of a consciousness of the divine authority under which he acted. And as self-deception, in the apostle's case, was absolutely impossible, the Christian doctrine which he was commissioned to teach must have been of divine original.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY:

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE, after his usual salutation, expresses his affectionate regard to Timothy, and his earnest desire to see him, and reminds the evangelist of the necessity of firmness and wisdom in discharging the duties of his office. Ch. i. 1—7. Ch. I.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

1. **THE** apostle introduces the epistle with his usual title and salutation, ver. 1, 2.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the appointment of God, in relation to the promise of life¹ by Christ Jesus, to Timothy my beloved son², favour, mercy, peace, from God our Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord³. Ver. 1.
2.

¹ *Promise of life.*] “He was an apostle for the purpose of announcing this promise to the world.” Newcome. See Tit. i. 1—3. The promise of the Mosaic covenant was that of a temporal life in the land of Canaan; that of the gospel is eternal life in a better state and world. See Benson and Macknight.

² *My beloved son.*] This is generally understood of Timothy as being a convert of the apostle. “These two verses,” says Dr. Priestley in his Notes on the New Testament, “may be thus paraphrased: ‘I, Paul, particularly appointed by God to be an apostle of his son Jesus Christ, the great object of whose gospel is the revelation of a future life, direct this epistle to thee, Timothy, whom I consider as my own son, being converted by me to the faith of Christ. May God grant thee all the blessings of the gospel.’”

³ *Favour, mercy, peace, &c.*] i. e. all the blessings of the gospel which flow from the unmerited, unpurchased mercy of God our Father, and which were dispensed to mankind by

Ch. I.
Ver. 2.

This epistle is indited by me, Paul, who am by the authority of God appointed to be an apostle of Jesus Christ; being commissioned and sent forth by Christ my Master, to bear testimony to his resurrection, and to preach his gospel; and especially to proclaim the joyful tidings of a life to come, which is the great and peculiar promise of the Christian dispensation. And it is addressed to Timothy my beloved friend, whom I regard with the affection of a parent, whom I converted to the knowledge and the faith of the gospel, for whose welfare I feel the tenderest concern, and for whom I cannot form a better wish than that he may participate abundantly in the blessings of that glorious doctrine which is the free gift of God, by his holy servant and messenger Jesus Christ our honoured Master, and which announces the joyful tidings of peace and pardon, life and immortality.

2. The apostle expresses his kind remembrance of Timothy, and his earnest desire to see him, ver. 3—5.

3. *I give thanks to God, whom I serve as my forefathers did¹, with a pure*
4. *conscience, (inasmuch² as I incessantly make mention of thee in my even-*
5. *ing and morning prayers³, being earnestly desirous to see thee, for I recol-*
5. *lect thy tears⁴, that I may be filled with joy,) when I call to remembrance*
- thine undissembled⁵ faith, which dwelt⁶ first in thy grandmother Lois, and*
- in thy mother Eunice⁷, and which dwelleth, I am persuaded, in thee also.*

Jesus Christ our Lord and Master, whose disciples we are, and who has honoured me with an apostolic mission. This is not a prayer to Christ in person; it is only a wish for those blessings of which he was the medium of communication.

¹ *As my forefathers did.*] ἀπο προγονων. “à l'exemple de.” L'Enfant, and Beausobre. “Majorum meorum vestigia secutus.” Beza. “Majorum exemplo: Eundem Deum colebat Paulus, quem coluerant majores ejus. Non enim alius Deus est Judæorum, alius Deus Novi Testamenti.” Rosenmuller. See Newcome. Some explain Rom. ix. 3, by giving ἀπο the same signification which it has here; but I think improperly. See the note there. The apostle had probably been charged by the Judaizers with apostatizing from the worship of his ancestors. He here defends himself from that imputation; and Dr. Benson thinks that the expression *a pure conscience* contains an oblique reflection upon the sinister motives of the judaizing zealots.

² *Inasmuch, &c.*] I follow Dr. Benson in the position of the parenthesis, so that the construction of the sentence is, “I give thanks to God—when I call to remembrance thy undissembled faith.” According to the more usual interpretation ὡς is made to stand for ὅτι, and the apostle thanks God that he makes mention of him in his prayers: *i. e.* that he has just reason so to do. See Newcome.

³ *Make mention of thee in my evening and morning prayers.*] In the original, *night and day*; in allusion probably to the continual burnt-offering morning and evening. Compare 1 Thess. v. 17, Dan. viii. 11, 12.

⁴ *Recollect thy tears.*] See Acts xx. 37, 38. It is supposed that the evangelist Timothy parted from the apostle at Miletus, and that he returned to Ephesus with the elders of that church; and that the apostle here alludes to the tears which he shed upon that occasion.

⁵ *Thine undissembled faith.*] “Timothy,” says Dr. Benson, “not only believed right, but he

I am represented by many who wish to injure my character and to disparage my labours, as an apostate from the religion of my ancestors, because I zealously support the liberty of the gentile churches, and because I every where teach that converts from heathenism are under no obligation to submit to the ceremonial law. But this report is a foul aspersion. For being myself a Jew, I continue to observe the rites of the law, and every morning and evening I offer my humble adoration to the one living and true God in the way that my pious forefathers did; and my conscience bears its testimony to the purity of my affections, and to the sincerity of my devotions. In these my daily supplications I constantly remember my beloved friend, imploring the divine blessing upon him, and expressing my earnest desire that he may be directed and preserved on his way to Rome, where it would afford me the highest gratification to have an interview with him, as I have not forgotten the tears which he shed at our last painful separation at Miletus three years ago. And when I call to mind your faith and piety, of the genuineness and energy of which you have given so many satisfactory proofs, I offer my devout thanksgivings to the God of mercy and truth, who first opened the heart of your excellent mother and her venerable parent to the reception of the great truths of the gospel, and whose blessing, co-operating with their wise and pious instructions, prepared your ingenuous spirit for the admission of the same glorious doctrines, which I am convinced (and I rejoice in the conviction) are now the ruling principles of your conduct and the sure foundation of your hope.

3. The apostle exhorts Timothy to make the best use of his eminent qualifications for the Christian ministry, ver. 6, 7.

For which reason I remind thee to kindle up⁸ that free gift of God⁹

6.

also acted right; he would not hypocritically conceal or disguise his sentiments, as the Judaizers appear to have done." 1 Tim. ii. 1, 5—7, 19, 20.

⁶ *Dwelt first, &c.*] ἐνῳκλήσε "inhabited: it was not a mere profession, or a transient feeling, but a fixed principle. See Benson.

⁷ *Lois—Eunice.*] These pious women were Jewesses, Acts xvi. 1. They had taken very meritorious pains to instruct Timothy in the Jewish scriptures, 2 Tim. iii. 15; and probably prepared his mind for receiving the instructions afterwards communicated by the apostle. Dr. Benson remarks "the undesigned coincidence of the epistle with the history as an internal mark of the genuineness of the epistle."

⁸ *To kindle up.*] So Mr. Wakefield. In the public version, *stir up*. "The original is ἀναζωπυρεῖν, which signifies to 'blow or stir up a fire when it does not burn sufficiently.'" Benson; who adds, that "possibly there might be some danger lest opposition and persecution should damp Timothy's zeal."

⁹ *That free gift of God.*] "The endowments of the spirit." Newcome. Dr. Priestley, in his

Ch. I.
Ver. 7.

*which is in thee by the imposition of my hands*¹. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fearfulness, but of power, and of love, and of wisdom*².

Knowing the sincerity of your profession, and your earnest desire of usefulness, and being likewise apprized of the difficulties and discouragements which occur in the faithful discharge of the Christian ministry, and which might appall a mind less firm and vigorous than yours, my first and most earnest advice is, that you would devote yourself wholly to the duties of your important office. Stir up and fan the holy fire that is kindled in your breast, and cause it to burn continually with a bright, a cheering, and an enlivening flame. Call forth into vigorous and constant exercise those qualifications for diffusing the knowledge and the power of the gospel, with which you are so eminently endowed, and which were in a very extraordinary manner communicated to you; when, after having been chosen as an associate with me in the ministry of the gospel, the elders of the church united in recommending you to the divine blessing, and the gifts of the spirit were imparted by the imposition of my hands. And remember, my beloved friend, that the spirit which the gospel infuses, is not a spirit of indolence or timidity which shrinks from difficulties and from dangers, but it is a spirit of wisdom, of power, and of goodness, which, arming the chosen defenders of the Christian faith with supernatural powers, inspires them at the same time with undaunted courage, tempered with discretion, and which, filling the heart with love to God and benevolence to man, diligently seeks, wisely discerns, and unremittingly pursues, the most efficacious means of diffusing the knowledge, the power, and the blessings of the gospel.

notes, remarks that "Paul had imparted to Timothy those gifts of the spirit which were peculiar to that age; but it is probable that it depended in a great measure upon men themselves whether they were more or less distinguished by them, the Divine Being imparting them most freely to those who were most zealous and active in the Christian cause."

¹ *Imposition of my hands.*] See 1 Tim. iv. 14; where the gift is said to be conferred by the imposition of hands of the presbytery. Perhaps the texts may be best reconciled by adopting Bengel's reading in the first epistle. See the note.

² *Of fearfulness, &c.*] This was the spirit of the law, which was a yoke of bondage, Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 3, 7; Heb. xii. 18—24. "of fear in the midst of persecution." Newcome. *Of power:* "in miracles and spiritual gifts." Newcome. *Of love:* "universal benevolence: love to God and man, the characteristic of genuine Christianity." *Of wisdom:* of prudence in displaying miraculous powers, in avoiding or softening persecution, in teaching and admonishing." Newcome. "Non vult Deus ut animo simus timido, sed forti, amoris prudentiæque pleno. Hæc ideo dicit, quod aliquantum metuebat ne Timotheus, conspectis illis perpetuis malis, quæ Paulum et Christianos premebant, ob id labasceret. πν. δειλίας animus timidus. Animo timido opponitur πν. δυν. animus fortis periculis et vexationibus resistens. Ex amore proximi fortitudo illa nascitur. Conjuncta esse debet cum hac fortitudine in admonendo, et castigando malos charitas et σωφρ. moderatio, ut doctor moderate se gerat in munere suo." Rosenmüller.

SECTION II.

THE APOSTLE, expressing his entire confidence in the truth, the importance and the ultimate success of the gospel, encourages Timothy to persevere in the faithful discharge of his ministry, whatever the personal consequences might be. Ch. i. 8—14. Ch. I.

1. The apostle exhorts him not to be ashamed either of the gospel or its suffering ministers, but to be willing to be a fellow-sufferer with them in the same glorious cause, ver. 8—10.

Be not then ashamed of the testimony concerning our Lord², nor of me a prisoner³ for his sake; but take thy share in the afflictions of the gospel⁴, according to the power of God⁵. Ver. 8.

Having thus imbibed the spirit of the gospel, and being eminently qualified to preach the joyful tidings, be not ashamed of that glorious doctrine which our master taught, for which he suffered, and the divine authority of which he amply attested, nor of the office of the Christian ministry. And think it no disgrace to acknowledge yourself an associate with me in this honourable work, though I am now impoverished, calumniated, and suffering imprisonment for the sake of Christ, and for the zeal with which I have defended the liberty of the Gentile church. Zealots may indeed represent me as a wretch deserted by God and man. Listen not to their malicious calumnies; but rather be willing to take your full share of dis-

² *The testimony concerning our Lord.*] So Newcome. Mr. Wakefield renders it, "the testimony unto our Lord." The original is ambiguous: it either expresses the doctrine which Christ attested, or the office of giving testimony to it; the gospel itself, or the ministry of the gospel. I have included both in the paraphrase, though the former appears to me preferable.

³ *Of me a prisoner.*] Dr. Benson supposes that "the Judaizers had objected to Timothy the sufferings of Paul, and intimated how scandalous it was to adhere to one who was so odious to mankind, and treated by them as a malefactor."

⁴ *Take thy share, &c.*] See Doddridge. Dr. Priestley observes, that "the apostle holds out no prospects of advantage in this life. On the contrary, he was ready to lay down his own life in the Christian cause. Has this the air of imposture?"

⁵ *According to the power of God.*] "according to the support that God affords." Newcome. "that gospel whose truth has been confirmed and sealed by the power of God." Harwood. The elliptical style of the apostle makes his meaning ambiguous. Both senses are good. The later seems to me most agreeable to the apostle's usual style. Mr. Wakefield says he is quite at a loss which to prefer.

Ch. I.
Ver. 8. grace and suffering in the cause of Christian truth and liberty; relying with confidence upon divine support. And shrink not from persecution in the promulgation of that gospel which God has supported and will continue to support by his great power in defiance of all opposition.

9. *Who hath saved us, and invited us¹ with a holy invitation², not in consideration of our works, but because of his own purpose, and of that favour which was given us³ in Christ Jesus before the ancient dispensations⁴.*

The God who has attested the gospel of his son by the gifts of his spirit, and who supports his faithful messengers under their severest trials, has graciously invited all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, to participate in the invaluable blessings of the gospel: and he requires of those who are disposed to accept of his invitation, to separate themselves from the unbelieving world by a public profession of faith in the gospel. This gracious invitation is sent to us, not because we have merited any favour from him by the perfection of our obedience either to the moral or the ceremonial law, but because he had resolved, purely from the impulse of his own unlimited benevolence, before the Mosaic law was instituted, and even before time began, to communicate these blessings to mankind by the mission of Jesus Christ. This gracious purpose was long concealed in his own breast, and the saints and prophets of former ages were wholly ignorant of it.

10. *But which hath now been made manifest by the appearance⁵ of our Saviour⁶ Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death⁷, and spread abroad the light⁸ of an incorruptible life⁹ by the gospel.*

¹ *Who hath saved us, and invited us.*] “who hath called us to salvation.” Wakefield. “who hath placed us Gentiles, as well as Jews, in a state of salvation.” Newcome. See Benson. The salvation of which the apostle speaks is, deliverance from bondage, both from the yoke of the law, and from the bondage of idolatry and vice.

² *A holy invitation.*] *i. e.* an invitation to separate themselves from the unbelieving world, as worshipers of the true God.

³ *Was given us.*] *i. e.* “which he determined to give us. See John v. 22, xvii. 24; 1 John v. 11; Eph. i. 4, 5; Tit. i. 2.” Benson. “We see here,” says Dr. Priestley, “how familiar this language is with the sacred writers, things being said to be actually done by God, when they could only be intended to be done. How natural, then, is it to interpret what our Saviour says concerning the glory which he had with God before the world was, of the glory which was designed for him before the beginning of the world, which does not imply his pre-existence.

⁴ *Ancient dispensations.*] So Newcome. *Gr. secular times.* The Primate refers to Rom. viii. 28, 29; and explains the words of that “undeserved favour which God determined to bestow on us, *i. e.* all mankind, through Christ Jesus, before the secular ages, *i. e.* all former dispensations.”

⁵ *Appearance.*] *ἐπιφάνειας* the word properly signifies a “public splendid appearance of a luminous object;” it is applied by ancient writers to the appearance of the gods. It here expresses the public ministry of Christ, which was made illustrious by his miracles; and is used in other places by the apostle to express the “glory of Christ’s second coming.” 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8; Tit. ii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 8. See Schleusner.

This merciful design is now made manifest to the whole world by the public mission of Jesus Christ, the appointed deliverer from the burdensome yoke of ceremonial institutions, and from the more grievous bondage of sin and death. This glorious Saviour has, as I may say, already put an end to the dominion, and drawn the sting, of death, by the assurance which he hath given that all the posterity of Adam shall be raised to life, and not a single trophy shall remain of all the triumphs of this mighty and universal conqueror. The gospel of Christ diffuses a cheering radiance over the darkness of the grave, and asserts in the clearest and most unambiguous language that delightful truth, which was before only the object of dim conjecture and anxious surmise, the resurrection of mankind to a new and glorious state of existence, which shall never more be subject to dissolution or decay.

Ch. I.
Ver. 10.

2. The apostle glories in his office as a preacher of the gospel, and in his sufferings for it, and expresses his firm confidence that the Christian doctrine will prevail to the end of time, ver. 11, 12.

Of which I have been appointed a herald, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

11.

In relation to this most interesting doctrine, I have been appointed by a special commission from our great instructor Jesus Christ to the honourable office of proclaiming it to the world. I have even been invested with the dignities and privileges of the apostolic character; and what is still more

⁶ Saviour.] See ver. 9. Jesus Christ was the deliverer from bondage.

⁷ Abolished death.] Καταργεω, proprie et generatim, otiosum, inutilem, vel inefficacem reddo, quocunque modo hoc fiat, ex κατα et αργεω cesso. Luc. xiii. 7; Rom. iii. 3; Gal. iii. 17." Schleusner. "Who hath indeed made death ineffectual." Macknight; who in his note remarks, that "Christ hath not abolished temporal death to any one, but he has deprived death of its power to continue mankind in the state of death. See Heb. ii. 14, 1 Cor. xv. 26."

⁸ Spread abroad the light.] φωτισαντος. So Mr. Wakefield. "not brought to light, as if reason could not discover a future state: the word signifies to throw light upon, to illustrate. 'Μαλλον εν Σολων Ομηρον εφωτισεν η Πεισιστρατος.' Solon illustrated Homer better than Pisis-tratus.' Diog. Laert. p. 36." Harwood. See Schleusner. "εις φως αγειν, Suidas. Illuminando patefacere, docere." H. Stephens. See Newcome, and Wetstein on 1 Cor. iv. 5. Dr. Whitby produces many pertinent passages to show the very obscure notions which the heathen philosophers and moralists entertained of a future life; but of a resurrection of the dead they had no conception at all. The Jews entertained some imperfect expectations of it. But the doctrine of Christ has placed it in the clearest light. Dr. Priestley well observes, that "notwithstanding all the corruptions of Christianity, this one great doctrine was never, in fact, denied by any one who ever bore the Christian name. Agreeing in this one great truth, we agree in every thing that is of primary use, and that has a practical influence in life."

⁹ An incorruptible life.] Gr. life and incorruption. Dr. Benson justly remarks, that "these expressions plainly show that the apostle is not speaking of the immortality of the soul, but of the resurrection of the dead and the consequent state of incorruption and immortality. See 1 Cor. xv. 53."

Ch. I.
Ver. 11.

astonishing, and continually excites my grateful admiration, I who was once a bigoted Pharisee and a blaspheming persecutor, have been specially authorized to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and to assert their freedom from the ceremonial law.

12. *For which cause also I am suffering these bonds¹: nevertheless I am not ashamed², for I know whom I have believed³, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep what he hath committed to me⁴ until that day.*

And indeed, as you well know, the imprisonment which I now suffer, and the imminent dangers to which I am exposed, are entirely owing to the fidelity, zeal, and courage, which I manifested in executing my commission. Nevertheless, I do not repent of what I have done, nor am I ashamed of the doctrine which I have taught: nor do I experience any secret misgivings with regard to the issue of this divine cause, or of the ultimate state of those who are embarked in its defence. Be assured, Timothy, I have not taken up this profession upon slight grounds. I know the character of that Being who is the great object of my faith and hope. I know how well he is able, and how immutably he is resolved, to support his own cause, and to carry on his own benevolent designs. I am well assured, and I triumph in the

¹ *These bonds.*] So Wakefield. Or, *these things*; alluding to his poverty, desertion, and danger, as well as to his imprisonment.

² *I am not ashamed.*] He thought it no disgrace to suffer in the cause of truth. "I have no misgivings." Wakefield. Rom. ix. 33.

³ *I know, &c.*] "By appearing to Paul on the way to Damascus, and by bestowing on him spiritual gifts, Jesus convinced him that he was risen from the dead, and was indeed the Christ, and no impostor." Macknight.

⁴ *He is able to keep, &c.*] τὴν παραθήκην μου, *my deposit*. The expression is ambiguous: it signifies either "what I have committed to him," viz. my future hopes and happiness. Newcome. See also Whitby: or, "what he hath committed to me," viz. the gospel-doctrine. The latter is most probable. The word occurs only in two other places, 2 Tim. i. 14, and 1 Tim. vi. 20; in both which it undoubtedly signifies the *gospel*, and therefore probably here. Also, this sense best suits the connexion. The apostle, though a great sufferer, is not ashamed. Why? Because he is confident that the gospel which he teaches, and for which he suffers, will be preserved by its divine Author to the end of time, whatever becomes of the ministers and teachers of it. "παράθηκη, *proprie, depositum*. Metaphoricè, *omne quod alicujus curæ est demandatum*, 2 Tim. i. 12. *Deum posse potenter tueri et conservare hanc doctrinam, fidei meæ commissam*." Schleusner. "*Eam posse doctrinam mihi traditam conservare ad finem usque mundi*." Rosenmüller. "I am persuaded he is able to preserve in the world till his future coming that sacred deposit with which he has intrusted me." Harwood. Macknight adopts the same interpretation. But Doddridge, Whitby, Wakefield, Worsley, Newcome, and Priestley, adhere to the public version. Benson illustrates both interpretations, but in his paraphrase adopts the latter. Wakefield, in his manuscript notes in the margin of Wetstein, now in possession of my learned friend Arnold Wainwright, Esq., gives the preference to the sense of "a deposit committed to the apostle;" which differs from that given in his translation, "what I have committed to him," which, however, is favoured by 1 Pet. iv. 19, to which he refers.

Until that day: "*nempe diem judicii, dicit enim apostolus Deus conservare potest et conservabit religionem, etsi ego sim in vinculis. Si ego non possum docere, alii docebunt, nec unquam deerunt doctores, usque ad illum diem Jesu Christi*." Rosenmüller.

thought, that when my season of service is over, the inestimable treasure which is now committed to my trust shall not be lost, but shall be transferred to other good and faithful hands in regular succession, and safely kept to the great day of consummation, when the glorious plan shall be complete in all its parts, and the gracious purposes of infinite wisdom and mercy shall be fully accomplished.

Ch. I.
Ver. 12.

3. The apostle earnestly presses Timothy to adhere steadfastly to the doctrine which he had taught him, ver. 13, 14.

Hold fast that model of salutary words⁵ which thou hast heard from me, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Keep, through the holy spirit which resideth in us, that excellent deposit⁶.

13.

14.

I instructed you in the true doctrine of Christ in plain and simple language. Retain firm hold of this invaluable doctrine, and in your discourses to others adopt the same plainness and simplicity of speech. Do not, to avoid offence, or to attract admiration, veil the salutary truths of our holy religion in obscure or pompous or mystical phraseology. And let Christian faith be combined with Christian love. Be kind to all, and exercise candour to those who differ from you, even to your bitterest opponents. But never sacrifice the cause of truth under pretence of moderation. Guard with the most jealous vigilance the grand and sacred deposit which has been placed in your hands as well as in mine: employ the gifts and powers with which you as well as myself are endowed, in supporting the Christian faith: and fail not to transmit the doctrine of Christ to those who are to come after you in the same state of purity, simplicity and perfection, in which you have received it from me.

⁵ *Model of salutary words.*] “*υποτυπωσις*, propriè, *delineatio*, *brevis ac rudis designatio et adumbratio operis*. Exemplar, in animo infixum; quod ideam, Platonici vocant. 2 Tim. i. 13, formam doctrinæ veræ ac salutaris, a me tibi traditæ, in animo tuo expressam habe.” Schleusner. “Inviolably adhere to that model of salutary instructions.” Harwood. Dr. Benson understands the sound words which the apostle here recommends to signify the words of the apostle himself as distinguished from the words of any uninspired and fallible men; and supposes that judaizing Christians and false apostles are obliquely reprovèd for coining hard words and mysterious phrases. See ch. ii. 2, 14, iii. 7, 13, 14, and iv. 3. “Sound words,” says he, “signify the pure gospel doctrine delivered in the plain simple manner of the apostles.” It may, however, be doubted whether the apostle meant any thing more than the salutary doctrine of the gospel.

⁶ *Deposit.*] *παραθηκην* this is the reading of the best manuscripts. See Griesbach. The common reading is *παρακαταθηκην*, the sense the same: viz. “the pure gospel.” See ver. 12, where the same word is used.

SECTION III.

Ch. I. *THE APOSTLE, lamenting the desertion of his Asiatic associates, and applauding the courage and kindness of Onesiphorus, urges Timothy to make a judicious selection of persons who should succeed to the office of Christian instructors, and to continue firm and faithful in his adherence to Christian principles, and to the duties of his office. Ch. i. 15.—ii. 7.*

1. The apostle expresses his regret at the apostasy of some of the Asiatic Christians; and mentions, in terms of high approbation and gratitude, the fidelity, zeal, and friendship, of Onesiphorus, ver. 15—18.

Ver. 15. *Thou knowest this¹, that all those who are in Asia have deserted me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

Some disciples from Asia accompanied me to Rome, or found me there. They at first professed great regard for me; but, when they saw the danger to which I was exposed, and the great animosity of the Jews, they were intimidated, and went over to the party of my opponents, who are zealous for the observation of the law, esteeming it no doubt most safe and reputable, and, with others of my associates, they have left me, and have returned to their homes. Of this you have probably been already informed. In the number of these apostates it grieves me to insert the names of Phygellus and Hermogenes, two eminent persons, of whose faith and fortitude I once entertained better hopes, and whose unexpected and unkind desertion of me in my present circumstances gives me the deepest concern.

16. *May the Lord show mercy to the family of Onesiphorus, for he often*

¹ *Thou knowest this, &c.*] The Greek writers in general understand the apostle as speaking, not of the Asiatic churches in general, but of the Asiatic Christians who were with him at Rome. “Οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ τὰτ’ ἐστὶν οἱ ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίας.” Œcumenius *in loc.* Such is also the judgement of Estius, Mosheim, Beausobre, Lardner, Doddridge, and Priestley. See Lardner’s *Hist. of Apostles*, ch. xii. sect. 10. Some intelligence of the apostle’s situation at Rome, and of the cowardly conduct of these Asiatics, might have reached Timothy before the arrival of this epistle. He might, being at Ephesus, have heard of their return home. Benson, Newcome, and others, understand the expression of a general apostasy of the Christians in Asia to the tenets of the Judaizers, of which the apostle had been informed, and which he mentions in order to excite the zeal of the evangelist. But an apostasy so general is not probable.

*refreshed me*², and was not ashamed of this my chain³. But when he was at Rome, he sought for me very diligently, and found me⁴. The Lord grant him that he may find mercy from the Lord⁵ in that day. And his many services in Ephesus⁶ thou knowest very well.

Ch. I.
Ver. 17.
18.

May the blessing of God rest upon the head of Onesiphorus and of all his family. His conduct towards me has formed an honourable contrast to that of his countrymen, to whom I have just alluded. His conversation, his tender sympathy, his generous liberality, have often relieved, encouraged, and consoled me in the season of distress and danger. His kindness to me has been like a refreshing breeze amidst the heats of summer. Though I was a despised and deserted prisoner, bound in chains, yes, in that very chain which galls my limbs while I am writing this epistle, and though Onesiphorus was a man of note and opulence, he thought it no disgrace to avow his affection for me and for the cause in which I suffer. But when he came to Rome, with much trouble and some hazard, he inquired after me with unwearied diligence till he found me; and he then administered to me the relief which his generous spirit prompted him to impart. I cannot express the sense I feel of my obligation to this kind, generous, and disinterested friend, much less can I make him any adequate return. May God reward him abundantly for all his kindness in that great day to which our glorious Master has directed our views and hopes, when even a cup of cold water given to a suffering disciple shall not be forgotten, and when virtue shall obtain its promised recompense. Nor is it in Rome only that I have received benefits from him. So long ago as when I resided at Ephesus you remember how respectfully, how hospitably, he entertained us; with what tender affection, and upon how many important and trying occasions, he generously offered his services to us; and how much we stand indebted to

² *Refreshed me.*] ἀνεψυξε. “cooled and refreshed me, by visiting me in my confinement and supplying my wants when I had like to have been scorched to death, by the heat and violence of persecution.” Benson.

³ *Of this my chain.*] τὴν ἀλυσιν μου. “this chain of mine.” Wakefield.

⁴ *He sought for me very diligently.*] This is no proof, as Dr. Lardner justly observes, that the apostle was in very close confinement. For how should a stranger, as Onesiphorus was, find out any man in a great city without inquiry? And when he had found out his residence, he does not appear to have met with any difficulty in repeating his visits to the apostle. This was also the opinion of Witsius. See Lardner *ubi sup.*

⁵ *The Lord grant, &c.*] “an usual Hebraism, in which the noun is repeated for the pronoun. See Gen. i. 26, 27, xix. 24; 1 Kings viii. 11; 2 Chron. vii. 2; 1 Cor. i. 7, 8; 1 Thess. i. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 5.” Whitby, Benson, Newcome.

⁶ *His many services in Ephesus, &c.*] ὅσα διηκονήσε. See Wakefield. The Syriac and Vulgate versions read *μοι*, which appear to have been followed by our translators.

Ch. I.
Ver. 18.

his friendship and his zeal. Such worth and disinterestedness of character cannot be too highly prized, and ought never to be forgotten.

2. The apostle further advises Timothy to be firm to his principles, and to be discreet in the choice of those who were to be the instructors of others, ch. ii. 1—2.

Ch. II.
Ver. 1.

*Thou, therefore, my son*¹, *strengthen thyself in the grace*² *which is by Christ Jesus.*

As so many, from timidity or other motives, are deserting the cause of truth, it is peculiarly incumbent upon us who remain faithful to redouble our activity and zeal. Permit me, then, my dear Timothy, whom I love with the affection of a parent, and to whose conversion I have been so happily instrumental, to press this duty home upon you. In the very important station which you so honourably and usefully occupy at Ephesus, it is of the utmost consequence that your faith should be firmly established in the doctrine of the gospel, and that your heart should be comforted and encouraged by those glorious discoveries which God of his infinite mercy has vouchsafed to reveal to mankind by his holy servant and messenger Jesus Christ.

2. *And what thou hast heard from me before many witnesses*³, *the same do thou intrust*⁴ *to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also.*

I have taught you the plain simple doctrine of Christ, not, as my calumnious opponents teach theirs, in a mean and clandestine manner, as if I were afraid or ashamed of letting my principles be known. No: what I have taught I have taught publicly, conscious of the authority with which I was invested, of the truth and importance of my doctrine, and of the purity and simplicity

¹ *Thou, therefore, my son.*] “There is something,” says Dr. Priestley, “exceedingly affecting and edifying in the manner in which this old servant of Christ writes to one much younger than himself in the same service.”

² *The grace.*] *εν χαριτι.* See ch. i. 6, 7, 8. “‘The grace that is in Christ Jesus,’ means ‘the blessings which God bestows upon men by him.’” Priestley. “The gracious gospel.” Wakefield. “Exert yourself with vigour in propagating the Christian dispensation.” Harwood. “*Fortis esto in administrando munere a Christo tibi concredito. Χαρης, ut Rom. xii. 3, videtur h. l. esse munus apostolicum.*” Rosenmuller.

³ *Before many witnesses.*] “*δια πολλων μαρτυρων.* So *δια* may be understood 2 Cor. viii. 18, and perhaps Gal. iii. 19.” Benson; who supposes that the apostle glances at the private and clandestine manner in which the Judaizers taught their doctrines. They crept into houses, and were afraid of being discovered. Newcome explains the phrase, “in the course of my public preaching.” Harwood renders it, “those truths which I have imparted to you, and which have been attested by such a variety of witnesses.” So Macknight. “*δια, coram. Hanc της δια significationem multis probat Krebsius ad Act. vii. 53.*” Rosenmuller.

⁴ *Intrust.*] *παραθε,* alluding to *παραθηκην, a deposit,* ch. i. 12, 13. Dr. Benson observes, that “it is plain the apostle expected that Christianity would continue in the world after their decease, and that they appointed a succession of men to teach it.”

of my motives. This heavenly deposit committed to my trust, and by me consigned to your charge, do you, O Timothy, with the same fidelity deliver over to others, who, by their firmness and integrity, will preserve it pure and uncorrupted; and who, by the clearness of their conceptions and their ready utterance, shall be qualified to act the part of wise, faithful, and successful instructors to the succeeding generation, when apostles and evangelists are silent in the dust.

Ch. II.
Ver. 2.

3. The apostle earnestly exhorts his friend to the exercise of persevering fortitude, diligence, and self-denial, as the only ground upon which he can hope for acceptance and success, ver. 3—7.

Bear thy part, therefore, in suffering⁵, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

3.

You have enlisted yourself under the banner of Jesus Christ, and you well knew that you then engaged yourself in a service of toil and danger. Do not then shrink from the difficulties with which you may be called to encounter. Be content to suffer as others do in the same honourable cause, and maintain your allegiance to the end of life.

No one⁶ who entereth into military service embarrasseth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath enlisted him.

4.

If you were to enter into the Roman army, you could not expect to obtain the approbation of your commander, and the reward due to faithful and approved service, by remaining at home and occupying yourself in the concerns of civil life, instead of devoting yourself to the duties of a military state: nor can you approve yourself the faithful soldier of Christ unless you make a serious business of your profession, and devote yourself entirely to the duties of it. If secular interest, or ease, or security, or any personal gratification, be the primary object of pursuit, you are disqualified from serving Christ in the important post which he has assigned you.

Also, if any man contend in the games, he winneth not the crown, unless he contend according to the rules⁷.

5.

⁵ *Bear thy part in suffering.*] συγκακοπαθησον is the reading of the Alexandrine, Ephrem, Clermont, and other ancient copies, and of the Syriac and Coptic versions. It is approved by Griesbach.

⁶ *No one, &c.*] Or perhaps, 'every one who entereth upon the military profession avoideth embarrassing himself with the concerns of this life, lest he should displease his commanding officer.' See Wakefield, and Rosenmuller. Dr. Benson observes, from Grotius, that "the Roman soldiers were not suffered to be tutors to any persons, curators of another man's estate, proctors for other men's causes, or to undertake husbandry or merchandise." "As soldiers, we ought to be both active and fearless." Dr. Priestley.

⁷ *According to the rules:*] i. e. "the rules prescribed to such as mean to contend in the

Ch. II.
Ver. 5.

The most honourable distinction among the Greeks is, to win the chaplet at their celebrated games. But you well know that no one, let his rank, his fortune, or his interest be what it may, can ever attain this grand object of public ambition, without having first submitted to all that self-denial, and to all those laborious and hazardous exercises, which are required by the rules of the games as previous qualifications, nor without the most eager and unremitted exertion while the contest continues. If the conditions are not observed, the prize is lost. Nor will that unfading crown, that far more glorious and enduring prize which awaits the conqueror in the Christian race, be ever conferred upon him who loiters in his career, or who, from indolence or timidity, or any other unworthy consideration, neglects to comply with the terms required by the great Master of the course.

6. *The husbandman must labour before he be partaker of the fruits*¹.

The man who will not plough, nor sow, shall never reap. The plenteous harvest is the precious reward of much previous and persevering toil and industry, nor can the harvest of immortal bliss be obtained upon any other terms. The reward, both in quantity and in value, shall be proportioned to the previous labour; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

7. *Consider what I say, and the Lord will give thee*² *understanding in all things.*

Reflect, my dear friend, upon the hints which I have suggested; apply them to your own case; act continually upon such principles and with such views. If you are sincerely solicitous to obey the call of duty and to live up to the spirit of your profession, you shall not want for direction and support. The God whom you serve, and whose blessing you devoutly implore, will be your counsellor and your strength. To his favour, guidance, and protection, I affectionately commend you.

Grecian games. He will not obtain the crown unless he use the proper exercise, diet, &c." Newcome. The crown was of parsley, laurel, or bay. See Raphelius.

¹ *The husbandman, &c.*] So Wakefield. "*Ordo naturalis verborum videtur talis esse. τον γεωργον πρωτον κοπιωντα, i. e. κεκοπιακοτα δει κ. τ. λ. agricolam de fructibus percipere æquum est, at ita demum, si prius laboraverit.*" Rosenmuller.

² *The Lord will give thee.*] The most approved copies read *δωσει* for *δωη*, which better connects with the illative particle *γαρ*. for the Lord will give, &c. See Benson and Griesbach.

SECTION IV.

FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT of the evangelist, the apostle sets before him the example of Jesus, and his own; and from various considerations he enforces firmness, faithfulness, and prudence. Ch. ii. 8—15. Ch. II.

1. The apostle reminds Timothy of the mission, the descent, the character, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, ver. 8.

Remember Jesus Christ³, of the race of David, who was raised from the dead, according to the gospel⁴ which I preach. Ver. 8.

To animate you to duty, often think on the character, the conduct, and reward of our great Master. Be not misled by the speculations of a vain philosophy. Whatever may be pretended by men who are ashamed to avow the truth, the man Jesus, who descended from the royal house of David, is the true Christ. He is not a man in appearance only, nor a human body inhabited and possessed by a spirit of a superior order. The gospel which I teach declares him to be a real man, born and descended like other men, and in no way distinguished from his brethren, except by his high commission as a prophet of God. His death was not imaginary, but real; and so likewise was his resurrection. Regard these important events as undoubted facts, the reality of which is not for a moment to be called in question, and a firm belief in which is to be the governing principle of your conduct as a Christian and an evangelist.

2. He reminds the evangelist that this was the doctrine for the propagation of which he was himself at that very time a prisoner and sufferer, ver. 9, 10.

³ *Remember Jesus Christ.*] Dr. Priestley observes, that “the apostle’s design here is to guard Timothy and others against the tenets of the Gnostic teachers. They said it was Jesus and not Christ that was descended from David. In allusion to this opinion, the apostle here says, that Jesus Christ, meaning his whole person, was of the seed of David, his proper descendant, a man, like Jews or other men; and that he had a proper resurrection in the flesh, as a pattern of our resurrection, which the Gnostics explained away. This was the pure gospel which Paul preached, and for which he was then suffering.”

⁴ *The gospel which I preach.*] So Newcome. *Gr. my gospel.* Some of the ancients suppose that Luke’s gospel is here referred to. Euseb. *Ecc. Hist.* l. iii. c. 4. But the apostle uses the same phrase Rom. ii. 16, xvi. 25, before that gospel was written. See Benson. Indeed it is not probable that these histories had obtained the title of Gospels at so early a period.

Ch. II.
Ver. 9.

For which¹ I am suffering affliction, even unto bonds, as an evil-doer; but the word of God is not bound².

These are the interesting truths in the publication of which I am incessantly employed, and on account of which I am even now suffering many hardships and afflictions; so that, although it has been the constant employment of my life ever since my conversion to the Christian faith, to promote the moral improvement of my fellow-creatures, I am here in confinement like a common malefactor, as if I had been guilty of crimes which merited exclusion from human society. Well,—under all my sufferings I have one consolation still: a consolation which never fails. Prisoner as I am, the glorious gospel is free and unconfined. I cannot indeed go, as I once did, from place to place, to proclaim the joyful tidings. But that sacred cause, the cause of truth and righteousness, that cause of which God is the patron and protector, cannot fail to make its way, and, in the end, to triumph over all opposition.

10. *Therefore³, I endure all things for the sake of the chosen⁴ people, that they also may obtain the salvation⁵ which is through Christ Jesus with everlasting glory.*

I suffer grievous wrongs; I am deprived of many comforts; I am bereaved of that greatest of blessings, personal liberty; and I feel these injuries to their utmost extent. Yet, knowing the important purposes which are answered by the sufferings of the advocates for truth, I do not repine. It was my zeal for the liberties of the Gentile church, whom God hath chosen to visit with his mercy, which incurred the resentment of my countrymen, and which was the occasion of this tedious imprisonment. And there is no suffering to which I would not willingly submit, if it might be the means of converting idolatrous heathen to the faith of Christ, and of inducing them to accept the privileges of the gospel so freely tendered to them, and by a

¹ *For which.*] *εἰς ὃν.* See Matt. vi. 7, Heb. xi. 2, Whitby, Wakefield, Newcome.

² *The word of God, &c.*] A lively turn of expression, which strongly illustrates the generous bent of the apostle's mind. He cares little about himself, if the gospel has its free and glorious course. See Macknight. "*ea semper propagabitur, etsi ego sum in vinculis.*" Rosenmuller.

³ *Therefore.*] *διὰ τούτο.* *q. d.* Why do I endure and voluntarily submit to these sufferings? Ans. For this reason: that the elect may be saved and brought to everlasting glory.—A writer in Bowyer (Battier) connects *διὰ τούτο* with the preceding verse: *q. d.* "but the word of God is not **THEREFORE** bound."

⁴ *Chosen people:*] *i. e.* Gentiles. See Newcome. Benson also supposes the Gentiles to be here particularly alluded to. But as the apostle in the context alludes also to the Gnostics, he may possibly, by the elect, mean Christians in general.

⁵ *The salvation, &c.*] The apostle distinguishes between *salvation through Christ*, and *everlasting glory*: the former is present deliverance from ignorance, idolatry, and vice; the latter is the final recompense of virtue in a future life. See Eph. ii. 5, 8.

wise improvement of the means of virtue, to obtain an interest in that everlasting felicity which is the great promise of the gospel to every practical believer. Ch. II.
Ver. 10.

3. The apostle excites his friend to vigorous and persevering exertion, by reminding him that to such exertions only are the promises annexed, ver. 11—13.

This is an undoubted truth⁶: *If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we renounce him, he also will renounce us; if we are faithless⁷, he will continue faithful: he cannot renounce himself⁸.* 11.
12.
13.

The profession, and especially the preaching of the pure uncorrupted doctrine of Christ, exposes us to many temporary inconveniences and sufferings; but it does not leave us without an adequate recompense. It is indeed, my friend, a most certain, a most solemn, and a most glorious truth, that whatever sacrifices we may be called to make in the cause of truth and virtue, nay, if we even suffer death itself for the sake of Christ and his gospel, we shall be acting a safe, a wise, and an honourable part. He died for us, and rose again; if we die with him and for him, we, like him, shall rise to a glorious and immortal life. If we suffer persecution for his sake, we shall hereafter share with him in his throne, and participate in his everlasting triumph. To these animating considerations there is also an alarming counterpart, which may justly awaken our utmost solicitude. If we who make a profession of Christianity, and who are placed in eminent stations in the church, who know the truth and the infinite importance of the doc-

⁶ This, &c.] What? Dr. Newcome replies, "The assertion implied in ver. 10, that God admits the Gentiles into the gospel covenant." It is generally understood as referring to the maxims which follow: and γὰρ, with which they are introduced, is understood as an expletive, or rather an inchoative particle after εἰ. See Benson, and Wakefield. Perhaps it is to be understood elliptically: *q. d.* Be ready to bear all things; for if we have died, *i. e.* have been ready to offer up our lives with him and for him, &c. Dr. Priestley observes, "This seems to have been a saying current among Christians, derived, mediately or immediately, from our Saviour himself. All Christians have one interest with Christ their head. They contend, they suffer, and they triumph together."

⁷ *If we are faithless.*] "A man may be unfaithful," says Dr. Benson, "by denying the Christian religion, or rejecting it; by corrupting it, or mingling another doctrine with it; or by living unworthy of it. If we are unfaithful, yet Christ is faithful, and must disown us." He adds, "that the unfaithfulness here spoken of seems to be, denying the Christian religion in time of persecution."

⁸ *Renounce himself.*] "He will not deny what he has engaged to perform." Dr. Priestley. "*Negare potest nos, sed non potest negare seipsum; negare non potest se esse Christum, et vera esse quæ ipse docuit.*" Rosenmüller.

Ch. II.
Ver. 13.

trine we are commissioned to teach, if we, I say, from indolence or timidity, or from any other unworthy motive, should be induced to desert our post, and abandon our profession, our case is wretched beyond expression. He has himself declared that he will another day disown those who now disown and forsake him; and in vain may we flatter ourselves that we shall escape his just animadversion. We may violate our engagements, but he will never swerve from his declarations, either of reward or punishment. He will never contradict himself. And his veracity, his wisdom, and even his benevolence, are pledged to the performance of his threatenings, equally with the accomplishment of his promises.

4. The apostle exhorts Timothy to insist upon the great truths of the Christian religion, to warn his hearers against unedifying speculations, and to approve himself a wise and faithful minister of the gospel, ver. 14, 15.

14. *Remind them of these things, earnestly charging them¹ before the Lord, not to dispute about words, which is of no use², but to the subversion of the hearers.*

Perseverance in the doctrine and spirit of the gospel is a duty of the highest importance. Remind your hearers, therefore, of the great danger of apostasy, or of tempting others to apostatize from the Christian faith. And solemnly warn them, as they will answer for it at the tribunal of their Lord and Judge, that they do not waste their time in fruitless speculations. Disputes concerning superior intelligences and emanations from the Supreme Being, though they assume the name of science, and wear the appearance of something very grand and sublime, are at best nothing more than controversies about unmeaning words; for the subject itself is beyond our comprehension. And when these fanciful opinions are so blended with the truths of the Christian religion as to supersede the most material and important facts upon which the Christian doctrine rests, they become, not only unprofitable, but highly injurious, and entirely mislead and pervert those unhappy persons who give attention to them, by filling their minds with the most erroneous notions concerning the nature and design of the gospel.

¹ *Earnestly charging them.*] διαμαρτυρομενος. See Wakefield.

² *Which is of no use.*] "These words," says Dr. Priestley, "refer to the idle fables and genealogies of the Gnostics about the emanations of inferior intelligent beings from the Supreme, and their descent to earth, which subverted the hearers by giving them false ideas of the nature and object of the gospel." "*Dum enim tales verborum pugnas audiunt, nihil certi esse in religione Christiana putant ac dicunt; et sic fides eorum subvertitur.*" Rosenmuller.

Diligently endeavour to present thyself before God³, approved by him, a labourer that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing⁴ the word of truth. Ch. II. Ver. 15.

The day will come when you must give an account unto God, of the manner in which you have fulfilled your important trust. Be earnestly solicitous upon that awful occasion to stand accepted and approved by him. In the mean time, consider yourself as consecrated to God, perform every duty as a tribute which you owe to him, as a sacrifice which you offer for his gracious acceptance. Be assiduous: expose not yourself to the reproach of having, through indolence or timidity, neglected the task assigned you. Like a faithful and a wise steward, distribute to every one his proper portion; and dispense the truths of the gospel with sagacity and discernment, adapting your discourses to the circumstances and situation of your hearers, so that every one in his turn may be instructed and edified.

SECTION V.

THE APOSTLE cautions Timothy against the errors of the Gnostics, which were then beginning to prevail in the church; and directs him to the use of the best means to reclaim men from error, and to confirm them in truth and virtue. Ch. ii. 16—26.

1. The apostle cautions Timothy against dangerous errors, especially those which related to the doctrine of the resurrection, ver. 16—18.

But avoid profane⁵ empty declamation, for they who use it⁶ will proceed to further impiety; and their doctrine will corrode like a gangrene. 16. 17.

³ To present thyself before God.] See Rom. xii. 1. "in this life." Newcome.

⁴ Rightly dividing.] "This phrase probably alludes to the business of a steward in a great family who gives to each his portion. Thus Timothy was to suit his admonitions to persons of all characters." Dr. Priestley.

"Operam da ut teipsum præbeas operarium Deo probatum valde gnavum et strenuum, qui recte tractat doctrinam veram. Ορθοτομεῖν sape est via recta incedere." Rosenmuller.

⁵ Profane.] "βεβηλος. Proprie dicitur profanus, omnis qui a sacris arcetur et mysteriis; qui quasi limine, τῷ βηλῳ, et ostio templi arcendus est. In N. T. de rebus dicitur, et omne quod est alienum a religione Christiana, significat." Schleusner.

⁶ They who use it.] "The construction in the original is imperfect. The verb wants a nominative, and the relative an antecedent. Wetstein says that the Clermont seems to have read at first ασεβεις. Dr. Owen observes, 'that such a nominative plural properly authenticated would set the whole right.'" Bowyer.

Ch. II.
Ver. 17.

I have been advising you, my dear friend, to adapt your discourses to the understandings and the characters of your hearers. Now, in order to this, you must abstain from that vain declamation which, however it may please the ear, or whatever pompous title it may assume, conveys no useful instruction to the mind, and is at the remotest distance from evangelical truth. Public teachers, whose discourses are of this complexion, may be expected to recede further and further from the faith and practice of the gospel, till, in the end, they become openly wicked, and apostatize altogether from the Christian faith. Such fantastic doctrines as are now professed and taught by men who call themselves Christians, are by no means matters of indifference. They gradually corrupt the minds of those who are infected by them, till, in the end, the whole moral constitution comes to be incurably diseased, and a total mortification of every virtue which belongs to the Christian character is the unhappy and inevitable result.

18. *Of which number is Hymenæus and Philetus, who have erred from the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past¹, and subvert the faith of some.*

A sad example of the truth of these remarks is to be found in two persons of learning and eloquence, who embraced the Christian faith, and who, impressed by the powerful evidence of truth, avowed their belief in the gospel of Jesus. I mean Hymenæus and Philetus. But these men, educated in the prejudices of a false philosophy, were disgusted with the Christian doctrine of a resurrection of the dead, as the proper ground of expectation of a future life. They have not, indeed, directly renounced the Christian faith; but have explained away its leading article. Interpreting figuratively what was intended literally, they have taught that the resurrection means nothing more than a change from heathenism to Christianity; and that it is already

¹ *The resurrection is already past.*] Dr. Benson agrees with those who conjecture that Hymenæus and Philetus contended that the resurrection was to be understood in a figurative and spiritual sense, or that it was the same as regeneration or proselytism; and so past at baptism. He observes, "that this was the doctrine of Marcion and the Gnostics." The probability is, that they were philosophers before they became Christians; and, like other philosophers, they held the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead in great contempt.

"From this," says Dr. Priestley, "it is evident that the apostle meant the Gnostics; and likewise, that he thought their tenets had an immoral tendency. They thought that the Christian resurrection could be nothing more than a new life; a state of vice being usually called a state of death, in the schools of philosophy as well as by Christian teachers. Also, believing the immortality of the soul, and holding matter in very great contempt, they were persuaded that the body would never rise again. But this was a dangerous doctrine. Whereas the doctrine of the real resurrection of Christ in the flesh, as the pattern of a real universal resurrection, was a new and striking thing, capable of producing the greatest effects."

past with regard to those who profess the Christian religion. This doctrine has made some proselytes, and its consequences must be very pernicious. For, by setting aside this essential requisite to a future life, the resurrection of the dead, they lose all that is peculiar, and all that is valuable in the gospel revelation.

Ch. II.
Ver. 18.

2. The apostle illustrates the great importance of adhering to the essential doctrines of the Christian religion, ver. 19—21.

Nevertheless², the covenant of God³ standeth firm, having this seal: The Lord approveth them that are his⁴. And, Let every one who nameth the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity.

19.

Whatever errors men, misled by prejudice, or puffed up with vanity, may fall into, the doctrine of Christ and the terms of acceptance with God remain unalterable. The gospel covenant is ratified by a seal which bears a

² *Nevertheless.*] ὁ μὲντοι. "This refers to ver. 16. The intermediate verses should be in a parenthesis." Dr. Mangey. Bowyer.

³ *The covenant of God.*] Pyle says that θεμελιος signifies either "a foundation of a building," or, "an indenture writing." Tillotson says that it is sometimes used as an instrument of contract. Dr. Benson adopts this sense of the word, and explains it thus: "Hymenæus and Philetus would have set aside the gospel covenant. But nevertheless the covenant of God stood firm, having the seal still hanging to it, to show that it was genuine, and in full force and obligation. On one side of the seal is an inscription denoting what God will do. On the other, an inscription denoting what Christians ought to do. And as long as the covenant stood firm, and had the seal hanging to it, all was secure and well, and their attempts to subvert it were idle, and would end in their own ruin."

The majority of commentators, with Grotius, take the word in its primary sense, of "a foundation of a building, upon which it was not unusual to place inscriptions." "These," says Archbishop Newcome, "may have been common anciently, as they are now." See Rev. xxi. 14. But Tillotson remarks, that "σφραγίς is only an inscription upon a seal, and has no relation to a foundation." See Benson's note. "*Fundamentum quod Deus posuit firmum stat. Evertunt quidem doctores mendaces quorundam fidem; totam vero ædificii molem, totam ecclesiam nunquam destruent. Habens inscriptionem hanc: σφ. hic est quod lapidi vel ædibus inscribitur. Olim singulas ædes habuisse inscriptiones quibus ab aliis distinguerentur demonstravit Warnekros.*" Rosenmuller.

⁴ *The Lord approveth them that are his.*] This is a quotation from Numb. xvi. 5, LXX., in which the words are applied to the case of Korah and his wicked accomplices, who rebelled against Moses: "Even to-morrow will the Lord show who are his, and who are holy." And on the next day they were all destroyed: "the earth opening her mouth and swallowing them up, and all that belonged to them; and they went down alive into the pit."—"Nothing," says Dr. Benson, "could have been more pertinent to the apostle's present purpose than this allusion. Though his modesty would not permit him to speak in plainer terms, yet in writing against the judaizing impostors, he could not in a more lively and emphatical manner have pointed out their wickedness and danger in opposing him who had such clear evidences of a divine mission, than by comparing them to Korah and his accomplices, who had so daringly opposed Moses, and perished in an exemplary manner for that high act of wickedness." Dr. Benson supposes, that in the latter clause of the verse, Let him, &c. depart from all iniquity, there is a further allusion to Numb. xvi. 27, where it is said that the Israelites departed from the tabernacle of Korah, &c. And that the apostle means to warn believers to "depart from the tents of Hymenæus and Philetus."

Ch. II. double inscription. The first declares what God hath done on his part.
Ver. 19. He hath borne his testimony to the men who were commissioned to propagate the gospel by the gifts of the holy spirit. And let those who presume to reject a doctrine so authenticated, and to treat the teachers of it with contempt, beware, lest, following the example of Korah and his company, who rejected Moses, they should incur a like fearful doom. The second inscription expresses the duty of those who are parties in the Christian covenant. Avowing Jesus as their Master, let them ever be mindful of the indispensable obligation under which they are laid, to guard with the utmost vigilance against all error both in doctrine and practice, and to withdraw from the society of those who would pervert their most sacred principles.

20. *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour¹.*
21. *If a man, therefore, thoroughly purify himself from such things, he will be a vessel to honour, set apart and fit for the master's service, and prepared for every good use.*

Though I have alluded to the doom of Korah, I am far from intending to insinuate that under the gospel dispensation, which is a covenant of mercy, every error shall entail the same terrible catastrophe which overwhelmed that contumacious rebel and his infatuated adherents; much less, that involuntary misapprehensions will incur eternal condemnation. Nevertheless I warn you that error in doctrine is not to be regarded as a matter of indifference. As far as it prevails, it in a degree contaminates the character, and becomes a considerable impediment to usefulness. For, as in a spacious and magnificent house there are precious vessels employed for honourable purposes, and meaner vessels for inferior uses, so, in the church of God, they who faithfully adhere to the pure uncorrupted doctrine of the gospel,

¹ *Some to honour, and some to dishonour.*] "The 'vessels to dishonour' are those vessels of wood and of earth which are appointed to the uses of the servants; while the 'vessels to honour' are those made of gold and silver, which are appropriated to the use of the master." Hallet's *Notes on S.S.*, vol. ii. p. 147. "Some (says Dr. Benson) by *vessels to honour* have understood the apostle Paul, Timothy, and other faithful preachers of the gospel; and by the *vessels to dishonour*, the judaizing teachers who wickedly corrupted the Christian doctrine. Whereas others suppose that they are both spoken of good men, who are more or less honourable, as they take care to avoid what is evil, and to excel in the practice of what is good. Dr. Clarke says (*Sermons*, vol. x. no. 4), "By *dishonour* meaning, not uselessness and being wholly rejected, as some understand it, but only a less degree of value and esteem, as the nature and design of this similitude plainly require; which, though they be indeed within the house, and not wholly excluded, yet no man who has a worthy sense of religion can long content himself with being of their number without desiring further improvement."

and whose practice is regulated by it, will be highly esteemed by the great Master of the household, and will be honoured by him as instruments of distinguished usefulness; while others who, misled by prejudice, blend and disfigure the doctrine of Christ by a debasing mixture of human inventions, though, because of their sincerity, they will not be absolutely cast away, yet being only qualified for inferior uses, they will be placed in less honourable stations. It is therefore the indispensable duty of every one, to the best of his ability, to clear his mind from all pernicious prejudices, that so he may lay a foundation for more extensive usefulness.

Ch. II.
Ver. 21.

3. The apostle warns the evangelist to set a guard upon his own spirit, ver. 22.

Avoid unreasonable desires². But follow righteousness, fidelity, love, and peace, with all those who call upon the Lord with a pure heart.

22.

You are placed in a conspicuous situation, in which it is peculiarly incumbent upon you to keep your affections under severe discipline. Guard, therefore, vigilantly, against excess of every kind. Restrain the emotions of ambition. Be not carried away with the love of power. And do not indulge a taste for novelty; do not affect the puerile vanity of always saying new things in order to excite admiration; but be content with plain truth, and practical piety. You may possibly be under temptation occasionally to defend the purity and simplicity of evangelical truth with undue warmth of spirit. Be upon your guard against intemperate zeal. Practise universal virtue. Firmly adhere to Christian principles. Be always employed in

² *Avoid unreasonable desires.*] *νεωτερικας επιθυμιας*. They who with the public version translate the clause "flee youthful lusts," forget how unsuitable this advice would be to the age and character of Timothy, who, according to Dr. Macknight, was at that time thirty-eight years of age; or, if the epistle was written during the first imprisonment, three or four years younger. Schleusner gives to *νεωτερικος* the sense of "omne quod magnum est, acre atque vehemens." "Fuge temerarias cupiditates." Rosenmüller: "In his autem studiis sive cupiditatibus habet locum inanis gloriæ sectatio." The learned writer adds, "alii νεωτερικον volunt esse novitium, ut cupiditates novitiæ sint cupiditates rerum novitiarum, noviter repertarum et proditarum, quarum homines, juvenes præsertim, solent esse cupidi, quo ceteris videantur esse sapientiores." And this indeed appears to me to be the true meaning of the passage. Avoid the desire of novelty: be not eager after new things, in order to make a display, and to excite admiration; but keep to the good old track, of faith, and love, and peace, in which all men of true piety and virtue walk. Macknight, who is almost the only English expositor who seems aware of the difficulty, though he gives the common and incorrect translation, judiciously observes in his note, "that the apostle does not mean sensual lusts only, but ambition, pride, love of power, rashness, and obstinacy. At the time when this epistle was written, Timothy was in the season of life which is most susceptible of these passions."

Ch. II.
Ver. 22.

doing good. Maintain a peaceable spirit; and as far as may be consistent with duty, live upon good terms both with believers and with unbelievers. Such is the genuine character of those who are sincere in their profession of the Christian faith.

4. The apostle exhorts Timothy to abstain from useless controversies, and to adopt the gentlest and the most efficacious means of reclaiming those who had been betrayed into error, ver. 23—26.

23. *But foolish and uninformative controversies avoid, knowing that they beget wranglings¹.*

Many who profess to believe the gospel, but who are strangers to its true spirit, who are puffed up with self-conceit, and are desirous of corrupting the simplicity of the faith, affect to be raising questions upon subjects of a mysterious nature, which, while they wear a semblance of sublimity, are, in fact, trifling and useless, such as no person of sound understanding and of real knowledge would give himself the trouble to discuss. Such questions as these avoid with care, as leading to nothing but endless and angry debate.

24. *But the servant of the Lord ought not to wrangle, but to be gentle to all men, ready to teach, patient of wrong.*

This disputatious temper is highly unbecoming a minister of the gospel, who ought ever to bear in mind, that the service of Christ, and the promulgation of truth and holiness, not his own literary or philosophical reputation, must be his primary pursuit. In this view, it becomes him to cultivate a mild and gentle spirit, to be ready upon every occasion to communicate instruction in the most acceptable and impressive manner, and to bear with meekness and patience the angry contradictions and the perverse misrepresentations of ignorant, prejudiced, or malignant opposers, not rendering evil for evil.

25. *With meekness, instructing those who set themselves in opposition, if, by any means², God may grant them a change of mind to the acknowledgement*

¹ *Wranglings.*] “Here he plainly adverts to the doctrine of the Gnostics, whose subtle discussions he often mentions with equal dislike and contempt.” Dr. Priestley. “*Μαχας, rixas, jurgia, lites.* Gellius xiv. 5. *de duobus Grammaticis*, Clamantes, compugnantesque (*μαχομεντες*) eos reliqui.” Rosenmuller.

² *If, by any means.*] “Markland and Dr. Owen observe that *μηποτε* is used for *ειποτε*. See Luke iii. 15, Bowyer. Knatchbull shows that it is equivalent to *ισως, forte*.” Newcome. Whitby produces many instances from the LXX. where it is used in the same sense. Gen. iii. 22, xxiv. 5.

of the truth: so that being rescued by him³ out of the snare of the devil, they may recover their senses to do the will of God. Ch. II. Ver. 26.

Far from retaliating abusive language and unkind behaviour upon those who desire to promote quarrels and divisions in the church, let the faithful minister of Christ, with good manners and good temper, set before them the evidences of Christian truth and the grounds of his own persuasion. Who knows but they may be brought to reason? who can tell but that God may in his good pleasure open their understandings to see, and their hearts to feel, the light and power of truth when plainly and fully exhibited to view, and thus induce them to surrender their prejudices and their pride? In this way may you and others, by the exercise of prudence and forbearance, save from destruction and bring to their sound understandings those who are intoxicated with self-sufficiency and prejudice, and recover to purity of faith, and the practice of duty, those who are now the most determined and malignant enemies of the gospel.

SECTION VI.

THE APOSTLE describes the bad characters of hypocritical professors, and the wicked artifices of seducing teachers, who would in future time appear in the church, but whose artful and malignant opposition would in the end be baffled and exposed. Ch. iii. 1—9. Ch. III.

1. The apostle warns his friend of the approach of difficult times, and describes the characters of false professors who would endeavour to subvert the truth, ver. 1—5.

But know this, that in the last days difficult times⁴ will come. Ver. 1.

³ *That being rescued by him:] i. e. that the opposers being rescued.* “εζωγρημενοι, rescued alive.” Wakefield. *by him:* i. e. by the servant of the Lord. *ανανηψωσιν*, “may recover their senses.” Wakefield. *ανανηψω*, “to recover from intoxication, to recover reason after a temporary stupefaction.” Harwood. *out of the snare of the devil:* the false accuser, the God of the heathen world, the entanglements of heathenism—to do the will of God: *εις το εκεινυ θελημα*, to the will of him, the remote antecedent, God. I agree with Mr. Wakefield and Dr. Harwood in referring *αυτη* to *θαλος Κυρις* as its antecedent; and together with Grotius, Newcome, Whitby, Benson, and others, in referring *εκεινυ* to *Θεος*. This makes the sense easy and intelligible. The exposition of Dr. Benson is very judicious: “And that they may awake out of this intoxicated sleep which would otherwise end in death, being taken alive out of the snare of the devil, by him, that is, by the faithful servant of the Lord, that for the future they may do the will of God.”

⁴ *In the last days difficult times, &c.]* Dr. Whitby and others interpret this prophecy of the

Ch. III.
Ver. 1.

In the course of your ministry, my dear friend, short as that period has been, you have known many who have totally apostatized from the faith; you have seen some who, from vanity, or shame, or prejudice, have been desirous to corrupt the doctrine of the gospel; you have been the mournful witness to some whose characters have been a disgrace to their profession. But I solemnly warn you, Timothy, that though my course will soon be finished, you will probably live to see times much worse than any which have hitherto occurred. For, strange as it may seem, in those awful periods that are advancing, men will, from one inducement or another, profess the Christian religion, whose temper is directly the reverse of the Christian spirit.

2. *For these men¹ will be selfish, covetous, arrogant, proud, evil-speakers,*
3. *undutiful to parents, ungrateful, unholy, destitute of natural affection², im-*
4. *placable³, slanderers, intemperate, savage⁴, enemies to goodness, treacherous,*
5. *headstrong, conceited⁵, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, retain-*
ing the form of godliness⁶, but rejecting its power: from such also turn
away.

approaching dissolution of the Jewish state, and of the obstinate and increasing wickedness of the Jews and judaizing teachers. In confirmation of this hypothesis, it is observed that the phrase, *the last days*, often bears this sense in the New Testament; that the caution, ver. 5, implies that the persons here described, and with whom the evangelist was to avoid all intercourse, were then in existence; and the prediction, ver. 9, that these delusions should be exposed and abandoned in a short time, agrees with the system of the judaizing teachers and with no other. But this interpretation depends very much upon the sense of the words *εσχαται ημεραι*, *last days*; which, Dr. Macknight remarks, are sometimes used to express *futurity* in general. See Gen. xlix. 1. And in this sense the prophecy of speedy destruction might be applied as properly to Gnosticism as to Judaism. And it is difficult to say what propriety there would be in warning Timothy, who lived at Ephesus, against the bad principles and practices of the Jews: many, therefore, are inclined to think that the apostle had Gnosticism chiefly in view. But, as it is certain that the prophets did not always understand the full import of their own predictions, (see 1 Pet. i. 10, 11,) and as some parts of the description of the false teachers are thought to be characteristic of the religious orders of the Romish communion, it is not impossible, as Dr. Benson and Dr. Priestley contend, that the grand apostasy might be the more immediate object of the spirit of prophecy in this passage.—“*Patet ex com. 5. Paulum agere de iis, quæ Timotheo vivente eventura putabat.*” Rosenmüller.

¹ *These men.*] *οἱ ἀνθρώποι* the men to whom the prophecy referred: professing Christians. See Wakefield.

² *Destitute of natural affection.*] *στοργή*, the natural affection which parents have to their children, and even brutes to their young. As children would be undutiful, ver. 2, so parents would be unnatural.

³ *Implacable.*] “irreconcilable.” Wakefield. “covenant-breakers.” Newcome: The word *ἀσπονδοί* has both these significations.

⁴ *Savage.*] *ἀνημέροι*, “*immitis, immansuetus.*” *Αγριος*, *Suidas.*” Rosenmüller.

⁵ *Conceited.*] *τετυφωμένοι*, “infatuated.” Wakefield.

⁶ *Retaining the form, &c.*] “These vices,” says Dr. Priestley, “were to abound in the last times, and among men professing godliness, and therefore in the Christian church. That persons of that character then existed, is evident from Timothy being warned of them; and they could not be any other than the Gnostic teachers. It should seem, therefore, that in the apostle’s idea the evil had then begun to operate.”

By the spirit of prophecy I announce to you, that before the awful advent of our Lord and Master, whether that event be nearer or more remote, men who bear the Christian name, and who profess to be followers of the humble, the self-denying, the meek, and the holy Jesus, will act a part the very reverse of that which his law prescribes, and his example exhibits.

Ch. III.
Ver. 5.

With all their pretensions to superior excellence, self-interest and the love of money will be their predominant passion. Valuing themselves upon their pretended knowledge, or upon their zeal for external forms, they will treat with supercilious disdain those whom they regard as their inferiors in station or privilege; nor will they hesitate to use the most contumelious language in speaking of those who may oppose their pretensions or their party. These false professors will sacrifice their nearest kindred to superstitious principles, or interested considerations, and under the hypocritical pretence of duty to God, they will neglect those offices of filial piety which are due to the superior wisdom, or increasing infirmities, of their parents. To God and man they will return evil for good. They will forsake the paths of virtue⁷. They will be as negligent in the care which they owe to their children, as in the attentions due to their parents. Under pretence of zeal for religion, they will keep no faith with men of opposite principles, and will wantonly violate their most sacred engagements. They will calumniate without scruple those who are the unfortunate objects of their envy and jealousy, how unspotted soever their character may be. They will impose no restraint upon their appetites and passions. They will show no mercy to those who have offended them; but will be fierce and violent in their expressions of resentment. Conscious of their own depravity, they will hate excellence in others, and will be the declared enemies of all good men. They will betray the secrets of those who unadvisedly place confidence in them, and who may intrust them with their most hidden purposes and thoughts. Conceited with the fancy of superior wisdom, they will scorn to ask advice or to consult the dictates of prudence. They will pretend to raptures of devotion; but will, in fact, be the votaries of sensual pleasure, and will render their religious profession subservient to the gratification of their passions. They will make great pretensions to piety, and will be zealous for the forms of religion; but will be utter strangers to its genuine spirit and practical influence. It will be some time before these great corruptions in doctrine and practice

⁷ Will forsake, &c.] *αποστοι*, qui foeda patrant, quibus nihil sanctum et venerandum est." Rosenmüller.

Ch. III.
Ver. 5.

have reached their utmost limits. But the spirit of the apostasy is already beginning to work. And as I before cautioned you to avoid errors in doctrine, I now faithfully and solemnly warn you against the more fatal errors in practice. Let me conjure you to renounce all kind of intercourse with men whose characters resemble what I have now described, how fair and how pompous soever their profession may be.

2. The apostle describes the artifices of these hypocritical teachers, which, nevertheless, will be eventually detected, and will expose their authors to merited disgrace, ver. 6—9.

6. *For of such are those who insinuate themselves¹ into families, and captivate weak women, laden with sins, led by various passions, ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Of these hypocritical and vicious teachers there are none against whom it is more necessary to be upon your guard, than against fawning sycophants, who assume a modest and gentle demeanour in order to introduce themselves into the houses of those whom they mean to seduce, and who, by their smooth discourse and accommodating doctrine, win the hearts of silly women, who, conscious of their infirmities, are desirous to reconcile the profession of religion with the gratification of their passions. These weak and vicious females often pretend to be seeking after Christian instruction, but the depravity of their hearts effectually prevents their ever attaining a truly correct and practical knowledge of revealed truth.

8. *And as Jannes and Jambres² withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth; being men of corrupt minds, disapproved³ concerning the*
9. *faith. But they shall not proceed very far; for their folly will be made evident to all men, as that of those men also was.*

¹ *Who insinuate themselves, &c.*] Dr. Benson interprets this “of the practices of the religious orders of the church of Rome.” Dr. Priestley observes, that “for such low cunning the priests and monks of that communion have been notorious, and that the specious insinuating manners of the Gnostics were also noted by the apostles and other Christian writers.” He also thinks that the apostle here refers to the nice subtilties of the Gnostic doctrines, “than which nothing could be more unintelligible.” Οἱ ἐνδύοντες “who creep or slide in like a snake.” Benson, Rosenmuller. Such characters are but too common in all ages and among all denominations.

² *Jannes and Jambres.*] The names of these magicians are not mentioned in the Pentateuch, but they occur in the Targum of Jonathan upon Exod. vii. 11, and in both the Talmuds. Also in the writings of Numenius the Pythagorean. Origen contr. Celsus, lib. 4. See Priestley.

³ *Disapproved.*] ἀδόκιμοι a metaphor taken from metals, which are rejected if they be not pure, and according to the standard, Rom. i. 28; 1 Cor. ix. 27; Tit. i. 16. “quorum sententiæ de religione minime probandæ, ideoque rejiciendæ sunt, et repudiandæ.” Rosenmuller.

Nor is it much to be wondered at that these silly creatures become dupes to the artifices of their false teachers, who, to promote their own sinister views, inculcate systems of doctrine which give encouragement to licentiousness of manners. For as the magicians of Egypt practised their contemptible artifices to elude the authority of Moses, and to encourage Pharaoh to refuse the demand which he made in the name of God, so do these men, in order to maintain that ascendancy which they have obtained over the minds of their proselytes, resist by every artifice in their power the efforts of those faithful teachers who would enlighten their understandings with Christian truth. And being men of corrupt hearts, destitute of all virtuous principle, and, notwithstanding all their professions, grossly ignorant of the Christian faith, and disowned by all virtuous and sincere believers, they hesitate at no means, however scandalous, for the accomplishment of their design. But these gross corrupters of the Christian doctrine, however successful for a time, shall not be suffered to pass beyond the prescribed limits. For the day of reformation shall arrive at the appointed season, when the crimes of these hypocrites shall be brought to light, and they and their delusions shall sink into universal contempt, similar to that of the impostors of Egypt, when, being no longer able to continue their frauds, they were constrained to acknowledge their own disgrace, and with shame and ignominy to confess, that those splendid works which they had calumniated as the sleight of men, were, in truth, no other than the finger of God.

Ch. III.
Ver. 9.

SECTION VII.

THE APOSTLE exhorts Timothy, after his own example, to adhere faithfully, at all hazards, to the simplicity of the gospel, the truth of which was attested even by the scriptures of the Old Testament, upon which the apostle pronounces a just commendation. Ch. iii. 10—17.

1. The apostle reminds Timothy of his labours and sufferings for the gospel, of the purity of his motives, of his Christian temper, and of the deliverances he had experienced; and appeals to the evangelist as a witness to the truth of his declarations, ver. 10, 11.

Ch. III.
Ver. 10.
11.

But thou hast intimately known¹ my doctrine, conduct², purpose, fidelity, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings. What things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra³! What persecutions I endured! Yet the Lord rescued me out of them all.

There are some professors of the Christian religion who accommodate their principles to their secular interest; or who at least, being speculative believers, conform to the fashions of the world in order to escape persecution. The reverse of this mean and dishonourable dissimulation has ever been my conduct, as you my beloved pupil, my intimate friend, my chosen associate, are fully apprized. You, Timothy, are perfectly acquainted with the doctrine which I have taught, and in which I was completely instructed by Jesus Christ. You know how far my practice has been correspondent with my teaching: to you I have communicated all my purposes of usefulness, and the plans which I had formed for carrying those purposes into effect. You have been witness to the fidelity with which I discharged the trust reposed in me, not presuming to corrupt the doctrine of Christ, in order to make it more palatable to the hearers, nor declining to preach it to the Gentiles equally with the Jews. You also know the forbearance which I have exercised under great provocations, the kindness which I manifested even to my bitterest enemies, and the meekness and fortitude with which I supported the severest trials. You well know what these persecutions and

¹ *Intimately known.*] “*παρακολαθεω*, propriè, *aquis passibus incedo cum alio, nec a latere discedo unquam, diligenter examino, perscrutor.*” Schleusner. See Raphelius *Obs. in Luc. i. 3.* The apostle probably refers to the intimate acquaintance which Timothy had with his character and views, in consequence of his having been so long his friend and associate.

² *Conduct,*] or, manner of life, *αγωγή*. “*Vitæ institutum, vivendi rationem, et modum.*”—“Scipio followed a different course of life: *αγωγήν τε βίαν.*” Polybius. See Raphelius *in loc.*

³ *What things, &c.*] I follow, but with diffidence, the punctuation of Battier, in Bowyer; who places a full stop at *παθημασιν*, and a note of admiration at the end of the following sentences: it suits the construction of the original, and gives a spirit to the passage, but I doubt whether it is quite agreeable to Paul’s usual style of writing. It has been before observed, that it is unaccountable that Paul should have referred to events so remote, without taking the least notice of his long imprisonment at Cesarea and at Rome, if this letter was written, as is commonly supposed, in the apostle’s second imprisonment. The events to which he here alludes are related in Acts xiii. xiv. At Antioch in Pisidia, the Jews excited the principal inhabitants of the city to expel the apostles from the place, ch. xiii. 50, 51. They fled to Iconium, where, after having preached the gospel with great success, the unbelieving Jews stirred up a tumult to assault and stone the apostles; who, being apprized of it, escaped to Lystra, ch. xiv. 1—7. Lystra was the birth-place, or at least the residence, of Timothy, who must therefore have been well informed of all that passed. Here Barnabas and Paul could with difficulty restrain the people from offering a sacrifice to them, in consequence of their having healed a lame man. But afterwards, at the instigation of the Jews from Antioch and Iconium, the populace stoned Paul, and thinking him dead drew him out of the city; but he soon recovered, and the next day accompanied Barnabas to Derbe, ver. 8—20.

sufferings were; some of which occurred to me in your native place, at the very commencement of our acquaintance, when your young and tender spirit would be most strongly impressed and most deeply wounded by them. I cannot myself, even at this distance of time, recollect them without horror. What indignities did I sustain from the machinations of the unbelieving Jews at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra! And in the last place in particular, your native town, what imminent danger did I encounter, when these vile emissaries nearly accomplished their murderous purposes, by persuading the thoughtless populace, who but just before had been with difficulty restrained from worshiping me as a God, to stone me as a malefactor who was not fit to live! It is indeed wonderful that I am still alive: and I can ascribe my preservation to nothing less than to the seasonable and even miraculous interposition of God, to rescue me from the malice of my persecutors, and to continue my life and my capacity for service as long as it shall be his will to employ me in his work.

Ch. III.
Ver. 11.

2. The apostle declares that similar to his must be the condition of all faithful professors of the gospel, while impostors and their abettors should for a time proceed with little opposition, ver. 12, 13.

Yea, and indeed⁴, all who resolve to live religiously in Christ Jesus⁵ will suffer persecution. 12.

Nor is my case by any means singular; for though my situation and character, as the apostle of the Gentiles, expose me to peculiar dangers and sufferings, yet in fact all who are determined to profess Christian truth, and to lead a Christian life, must expect to meet with similar trials, and will in some shape or other be persecuted, either by misguided professors of the gospel, or open enemies to it. And you, my beloved friend, as well as others, if you are an upright, faithful, zealous and active minister of Christ, must expect a similar treatment.

But bad men and impostors⁶ will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived⁷. 13.

⁴ *Yea, and indeed.*] και παντες δε κ. τ. λ. Dr. Benson remarks (after Hutchinson) the elegance of inserting δε after και in the beginning of a sentence, when an author is going to add something more or greater than he has said already. Comp. Acts v. 32. See Xenophon *Cyrop.* lib. i. p. 63, 8vo, with Hutchinson's note.

⁵ *In Christ Jesus.*] i. e. "as Christians." Newcome. Dr. Priestley observes, that "here the apostle opposes his principles and conduct to those of the Gnostics, who, in general, avoided all persecution, by complying with the demands of the times, and contented themselves with speculating concerning religion."

⁶ *Impostors.*] γοητες. Dr. Benson observes, "that the word properly signifies sorcerers,"

Ch. III.
Ver. 13.

Very different indeed will be the condition of those who corrupt the gospel to accomplish their own sinister purposes. They will escape the persecutions to which fidelity would have exposed them, and will stand high in the estimation of those who would have rejected truth with abhorrence. So shall these crafty impostors, and their willingly deluded disciples, the deceived and the deceivers, go on from error to error, and from crime to crime, till they are in the end overtaken by those judgements which are in reserve for the obstinate and the impenitent.

3. The apostle exhorts his friend to adhere firmly to those doctrines which he had learned of him, and which were confirmed by the Jewish scriptures, into the knowledge of which he had been early initiated, ver. 14, 15.

14. *But continue thou in the doctrines which thou hast learned¹, and been convinced of², knowing from whom³ thou hast learned them.*

You see, Timothy, I hold out no secular advantages to induce you to persevere in your Christian profession. I have even faithfully warned you of the dangers and persecutions which in present circumstances are the inseparable concomitants of the faithful fearless discharge of the Christian ministry. Yet do not desert the cause. I solemnly charge you, at every hazard, to adhere firmly, and with an unwavering spirit, to those inestimable

magicians, jugglers, like Jannes and Jambres. “Γογς, incantator, præstigiator, qui præstigiis, aliisve malis artibus imponit.” Schleusner. They who interpret this passage as a prophecy of the grand apostasy, suppose this word to be an allusion to the pretended miracles of the church of Rome.

⁷ *Deceiving, &c.] q. d.* Bad men and their seducers, deceivers, and those who are willingly deceived by them, shall grow worse and worse. Dr. Priestley observes, “One error leads to another, and one vice leads to another; and the degree of infatuation and wickedness to which some men arrive, and which they will even apologize for, would not be credited, if both history and observation did not prove it.”

¹ *Continue in the doctrines which thou hast learned.]* Dr. Benson observes in an excellent note upon this passage, that “fierce controversies and warm disputes create contentions among Christians, and divide them into parties and factions. They also tend to the subversion of the hearers. If once you unhinge some persons, and cause them to doubt of the truth of what they learned in younger life, they are ready to doubt of every thing, and throw off all religion as a fallacy. But notwithstanding this, what mistakes have been imbibed in education ought to be rooted out, though gradually, and with a gentle hand. And disputes and controversies are so far from being of a dangerous tendency, that they are the very things which preserve knowledge in the world, and rouse men to attention. Let human authority take away the liberty of free debate, and thick darkness will soon follow. Had Timothy been taught by the Judaizers, and brought up from his infancy in wrong principles, St. Paul would not have exhorted him to have continued in the things which he had learned and been assured of. But he was to continue in them because he knew of whom he had learned them: viz. of a true apostle; and that they were agreeable to the scriptures of the Old Testament, with which he had been acquainted from his infancy.”

² *Convinced of.] επισημως.* “convinced of by proof.” Wakefield.

truths which you have learned of me. You certainly know that I am neither a wicked man nor an impostor. You have had abundant proof of my apostolical mission, and of the divine authority of my doctrine. Let no consideration induce you to desert the path of truth. Ch. III.
Ver. 14.

And that from a child thou hast known the sacred writings⁴, which are able to make thee wise⁵ unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus⁶. 15.

You have a still further inducement to adhere faithfully to the Christian doctrine, inasmuch as it has been your felicity to have been early and carefully instructed, by your pious parents, in the Jewish scriptures, and especially the prophetic writings. And whatever false interpretations some may give to them, or whatever erroneous conclusions they may draw from them, be assured, that when properly understood, they bear convincing testimony to the truth of the Christian doctrine. Not only do the prophecies receive their proper accomplishment in Jesus of Nazareth, but the patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian dispensations, are all essential parts of the same wise and beneficent system which infinite wisdom has formed for the gradual instruction and amelioration of mankind. So that the right apprehension of the sacred writings of the Old Testament will lead you to believe in Jesus as the true Messiah, and by a practical regard to his doctrine, which is the truest wisdom, to secure that ultimate and everlasting felicity which will be an infinite compensation for every temporary loss or suffering.

³ *From whom.*] *παρὰ τίνος.* Some good copies read *τινων*, in the plural number. Some suppose that Timothy had received instruction from Barnabas as well as Paul, as he certainly had from his pious mother and grandmother, to whose early care in instructing him in the Jewish scriptures the apostle immediately refers.

⁴ *From a child, &c.*] Dr. Priestley remarks, that “by *scriptures* the apostle could only mean the Jewish scriptures, in the knowledge of which Timothy had been educated by his mother and grandmother, who were both Jewesses, though his father was a Gentile. The Jews were, and to this day are, remarkable for making their children acquainted with the scriptures. What a reflection is this upon Christian countries, and even upon this of ours, in many parts of which a great majority of the people cannot read at all, and with regard to many of whom better things might be expected! though their children are taught to read, they are very indifferent about their instruction in those things which it most of all concerns them to know. To the Jewish scriptures the apostle exhorts Timothy to join the study of Christianity, and they both make but one great scheme of revelation, and can never be separated.”

⁵ *Make thee wise.*] “*σοφισαι* has here the sense of the Hebrew conjugation *hiphil*.” Benson.

⁶ *Through faith, &c.*] The apostle urges Timothy to perseverance in the Christian doctrine, for which he assigns two reasons; the first is, that he knew that he had received it from an apostle of Christ, an authorized and qualified teacher. The second reason is, that he had been early instructed in the Jewish scriptures. Consequently the apostle’s meaning must be, that those scriptures well understood contain satisfactory evidence of the truth of the Christian religion. This observation, therefore, is to be understood of the inspired prophetic scriptures, and probably of them alone.

CH. III. 4. The apostle concludes his observations and advices with a high and just encomium upon the Jewish scriptures, ver. 16, 17.

Ver. 16. *All scripture inspired by God¹ is also profitable² for instruction, for*
 17. *conviction³, for correction⁴, for discipline in righteousness⁵, that the man of God⁶ may be complete⁷, perfectly fitted for every good work.*

¹ *All scripture, &c.*] Πασα γραφη, θεοπνευστος και ωφελιμος, κ. τ. λ. The word και is wanting, Dr. Benson says, in one MS., and certainly in the Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate versions. See Griesbach. It is omitted by Grotius, and in the versions of Wakefield and Harwood.—If this reading be adopted, the apostle does not define what scripture is divinely inspired; but if the και should be retained, and it has the authority of manuscripts in its favour, the common version may be allowed: *All scripture is given by inspiration of God.* In this sense the word *scripture* must necessarily be restrained to the sense which suits the connexion: that is, to the *prophetic* scriptures, of which alone the apostle is treating. To understand it, as some do, as a general authoritative assertion of the plenary inspiration of all the books of the Old Testament, is, to say the least, very injudicious; and it is hard to believe that the apostle intended to make a declaration so palpably erroneous. But he probably intended no such thing: he referred only to the prophetic scriptures, which, if genuine, are unquestionably inspired. Archbishop Newcome supposes that Paul not only means to include all the Old Testament, but as much of the New as was then written; but it is plain that the apostle is only treating of those scriptures which Timothy had learned in his childhood, and which contained those proofs of the divine mission of Christ which were necessary to furnish the man of God, the Christian minister and evangelist, for the good work of reasoning with, and converting, or confuting, the Jews. “πα. γρ. κ. τ. λ. Either all scripture is given by inspiration, as Chrysostom and most of the protestant interpreters; or, omitting the comma after γραφη, ‘All divinely inspired scripture is also profitable,’ as Grotius and most of the popish commentators. Whichever way it is pointed, the expression must not be understood to comprehend the books of the New Testament which were not yet collected together, but the sacred writings of the Old Testament, mentioned ver. 15, as Michaelis observes.” Bowyer. “The writers of the New Testament,” says Bishop Barrington in Bowyer’s Appendix, “always distinguish between γραφη and γραφαι. The former signifies some portion of scripture, the latter the scripture in general. ‘Every portion of scripture,’ says the apostle, ‘inspired by God, is profitable,’” &c.

“The intention of the apostle,” says Dr. Priestley, “was not to make any declaration concerning the inspiration of the scriptures, but to show the proper use of them in inculcating those good moral principles from which so many persons at that time departed; and it will sufficiently justify his thus incidentally calling the scriptures *inspired*, if they were written by prophets or men inspired by God, or if any thing that they wrote had been delivered by particular commission from God, which, no doubt, many things contained in the scriptures were. But such men were certainly capable of expressing them in words, and of committing them to writing, without any further inspiration; and therefore there is no occasion to suppose that, as writers, they had any inspiration at all.” Also, together with what they delivered as from God, which is easily distinguished, they might mix advices, &c. of their own, which, with the best intentions, should discover the natural weakness of men. The weakness of the apostles, as men and as writers, in reality proves that the doctrine they delivered was not their own, and that the power by which they were supported was from God only.”

² *Is also profitable.*] That the scriptures are of great general use for instruction and edification, cannot be denied: but this is not the apostle’s meaning here. His object is to show that the prophetic scriptures are admirably adapted to qualify an evangelist to preach the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, and he distinctly shows in what particulars they are useful to the Christian preacher. This view of the apostle’s design has been too much overlooked by commentators, and this oversight has misled many in their interpretation of the text.

³ *For conviction.*] προς ελεγχον. See Harwood and Benson. “ελεγχος, propriè, demonstratio, probatio, quæ fit argumentis certis et rationibus indubitatis, qua rei certitudo efficitur, argumentum.” Schleusner. See Heb. xi. 1. The apostle’s meaning is, that the prophetic scrip-

Of those books which are held in the highest estimation by the Hebrew nation, certain portions are, and others are not, of divine authority. A sound judgement will discriminate: and whatever respect may be due to the productions of wise and good men, the inspired scriptures alone are entitled to our entire confidence, and are the only authority to which we can with propriety appeal as a confirmation of the Christian revelation. With respect to the inspired scripture, therefore, I may say, that the whole is profitable and edifying, and that every part has its appropriate use. One portion of the Jewish scriptures is calculated to instruct those who peruse and understand them, in the advent of the Messiah, in his character and offices, and in the nature of that spiritual kingdom which he would be authorized to establish. The prophetic writings also contain the most convincing evidence of the mission of Christ, having received their proper accomplishment in him, and in no other person. The same scriptures are likewise well adapted to correct the extravagant errors into which the Jews are so prone to fall, both with respect to the temporal nature of the Messiah's kingdom, and to the perpetuity and universal obligation of the Mosaic institute. Finally, the Jewish scriptures themselves plainly teach the proper discipline of the new dispensation, as consisting, not, like the old covenant, in the obser-

Ch. III.
Ver. 17.

tures of the Old Testament supply the Christian teacher with decisive arguments in favour of the divine mission of Christ.

⁴ *For correction.*] “*προς επανορθωσιν, propriè, correctio ejus quod incurvatum est. Omnis restitutio in integrum et meliorem statum. Apud Polybium; de correctione erroris et falsæ opinionis.*” Schleusner, and Raphelius. The apostle means that the right understanding of the Jewish scriptures would correct the erroneous opinions into which the Jews had fallen concerning the nature and design of the dispensation of the Messiah.

⁵ *Discipline in righteousness.*] “*παιδεία, omnis institutio et disciplina puerilis. Quævis alia institutio et disciplina, qua quis utitur ad formandos et imbuendos animos.*” Schleusner. The apostle means that the Jewish scriptures explicitly declare the terms upon which the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom are to be obtained; the institute which it will require, the character which it will form, and to which its promises (*δικαιοσύνη, its justification,*) are annexed. See Jerem. xxxi. 31—34, Heb. viii. 8.

⁶ *The man of God.*] This was a title which was given to the prophets under the old dispensation. See 2 Kings iv. 40, &c. It is applied to Timothy as an evangelist endued with extraordinary powers, 1 Tim. vi. 11; and may perhaps be intended to express Christian ministers in general. See Newcome. Dr. Benson, on 2 Pet. i. 21, says, that “the expression *man of God* occurs about fifty times in the Old Testament, and always signifies an *inspired person, or prophet.*”

⁷ *Complete.*] *αρτιος.* The Clermont and Corbey copies read *τελειος*, and the old Italic and Vulgate *perfectus*. “*Αρτιος, integer, perfectus, omnibus numeris absolutus.*” Schleusner; who says that it is a word used by arithmeticians and geometers to express two figures or numbers which exactly coincide. Raphelius (*Annot. Philol.*) observes, that it is used by Herodotus in the sense of *paratus*, ready. The apostle's meaning is, that the evangelist having been instructed by himself in the Christian doctrine, and being also perfectly conversant with the Jewish scriptures, would be completely qualified for the performance of every branch of his office of preaching the gospel, both to Jew and Gentile.

Ch. III.
Ver. 17.

vation of outward rites, but in the love of God and man, and in the practice of universal virtue. So that by a careful perusal of the writings of the Old Testament, in connexion with the instructions which you have received from me, you will become complete for the ministry of the gospel; an evangelist perfectly qualified for the honourable and successful discharge of the various duties of your arduous office, whether for the conversion of the heathen, or for the conviction or confutation of the Jews. Such is the high estimation in which I hold the sacred oracles of the Jews, though I am calumniated by my adversaries as despising and disparaging their authority, and as endeavouring to subvert their design.

SECTION VIII.

Ch. IV. *THE APOSTLE gives a solemn charge to Timothy to be faithful, firm, and persevering, in the duties of his office, and enforces the charge by various important considerations. Chap. iv. 1—8.*

1. The apostle presses upon the evangelist diligence, earnestness, patience and perseverance, in the duties of his ministry, from the consideration of the divine inspection, and the account which he would give to Christ at the great day. Ch. iv. ver. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. *I solemnly charge thee therefore, in the presence of God, and of Jesus Christ¹, who will hereafter judge the living and the dead, and by his appearance, and by his kingdom², proclaim the word, be urgent in season, out of season³, convince, reprove, exhort, with the utmost patience of instruction⁴.*

¹ *Of Jesus Christ.*] The oldest copies and versions have not the words *τῷ Κυρίῳ*, of the Lord, and they are also omitted in Griesbach's edition and Newcome's translation. *In the presence of Jesus Christ*, that is, as though Jesus Christ were now actually present with me or you. If Jesus Christ is to judge the world in person, he must, no doubt, be personally and intimately acquainted with the characters and conduct of men. But probably the event may not exactly correspond with the literal signification of the words. And it is by events only that prophecy can be truly interpreted.

² *And by his appearance, &c.*] The best copies read *καὶ* for *κατὰ*. See Griesbach and Newcome. *q.d.* I charge you, as you will answer for it at his glorious appearance, when he shall come to take possession of his kingdom.

³ *In season, out of season.*] *ἐνκαιρῶς, ἀκαιρῶς*. "when you can do it in safety, and when it will expose you to danger; in private, as well as in public; on Lord's days, and on other days." Benson. Dr. Priestley observes, that "there cannot be any charge more solemn than this;

You, O Timothy! have been favoured with advantages beyond almost all others, to qualify you for the honourable and sacred office with which you are invested. You have enjoyed the instructions and the example of an apostle, you are well acquainted with the Jewish scriptures, you are endowed with extraordinary gifts and powers. Let then your exertions be proportioned to your qualifications.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 2.

I solemnly adjure you therefore, in the name and presence of that great God who searches the hearts, who communicates to all their several talents and qualifications for usefulness, and who strictly observes how these talents are employed; I adjure thee further, in the name and as in the presence of our revered master Jesus Christ, who is appointed to the high and glorious office of judging the living and the dead, at whose tribunal we must hereafter appear, who will make inquisition into our conduct, and reward us according to our works: Yes, my friend, I solemnly adjure you, by the approaching solemnities of that awful day, to which, as the disciples of Jesus, we look forward with anxious expectation, when Jesus shall appear again in pomp and majesty, to raise the dead and to judge the world; and by the glories of that celestial empire which will then commence, and in the honours and the triumphs of which we hope, and, if faithful to our profession, shall certainly bear a conspicuous part: upon all these important and weighty considerations I adjure and charge thee, as a Christian evangelist, proclaim the gospel upon all occasions, and in every place, with energy and courage; press home the glorious doctrine upon the hearts of your hearers, not only at stated seasons of public worship and instruction, but upon every opportunity of communicating evangelical truth which may accidentally occur, and watch for such opportunities, whether in public or in private: confute the opposers and the corrupters of the gospel, and establish the truth by the most convincing evidence: reprove those who are departing from the simplicity of the faith, or whose conduct is a disgrace to their profession: exhort your hearers to

and as the duties here enumerated are no other than those of every minister of the gospel, not only ought all ministers to be zealous in the discharge of what they apprehend to be their duty, of which they are to give so solemn an account, but the people ought also to bear with their zeal, which is intended for their good, though in consequence of their not giving the same attention to the subject of religion, they may not immediately perceive the importance of some articles on which their ministers may see reason to lay great stress."

⁴ *With the utmost patience of instruction.*] Dr. Benson says, "It is observable that the apostle never mentions patience and lenity when he putteth Titus upon reproof; whereas he frequently recommends them to Timothy, ch. ii. 24, 25, iii. 10. Whether Timothy's being of a warmer temper than Titus, or the obstinacy of the persons with whom Titus had to do, might occasion this difference in the apostle's exhortations, does not now plainly appear."

Ch. IV.
Ver. 2.

perseverance in Christian doctrine, and in virtuous practice. Let me add, that though I desire you to be zealous, I would enter a caution against heat of temper and imprudent zeal. Let patience and forbearance accompany your instructions. Indulge no resentment against those who are unwilling to listen to your doctrine, who even treat it with contempt, and load you with reproach. Meekly persevere in the performance of your duty, and leave the result to God.

2. The apostle enforces the exhortation, from the consideration of the increasing number of unfaithful teachers, and of prejudiced and immoral hearers, ver. 3—5.

3. *For a time will come, when men will not endure this salutary doctrine¹, but to soothe their ears² will multiply to themselves teachers according to*
4. *their own inclinations, and will turn away their attention from truth, and will go aside to fables³.*

Perhaps you are ready to complain that men are unwilling to hear the gospel, and you are thereby discouraged from preaching it. But be assured, Timothy, that, bad as the state of things in that respect now is, it will in a short time be much worse. You may now teach the plain unsophisticated truths of the Christian religion, and may enforce its moral precepts, and you will have many hearers who will be instructed, pleased, and edified, with your doctrine. But in a few years the case will be altered. Men professing Christianity will not endure to hear those salutary truths which would make them wiser and better. They will become very nice and captious in their judgement concerning their teachers. And in the choice of instructors each will expect to have his own taste gratified in preference to the edification and

¹ *Salutary doctrine.*] *ὑγιαίνουσα*, sound, wholesome, healthful doctrine. "That is sound doctrine," says Dr. Benson, "which promotes a holy life. And it is the love of vice which renders men averse to sound doctrine, and puts them upon following such teachers as will gratify their humours and inclinations; and please their ears or fancies, without attacking or condemning their opinions and their vices."

² *But to soothe their ears.*] So Wakefield. Gr. "having itching ears." For this collocation of the words, see Markland *apud* Bowyer.

³ *To fables.*] Dr. Priestley says, "The doctrines to which the apostle here alludes were undoubtedly those of the Gnostics. He did not live long enough to see the rise of other and greater corruptions of Christianity, though they were in some respects of a similar nature. Had the apostle lived to have seen the rise and progress of such doctrines as the trinity, original sin, predestination, and atonement, his indignation would have risen much higher than it did against any doctrines held by the Gnostics, because they were much further removed from the genuine principles of Christianity. Compared with these doctrines, which infringe upon the great article of the unity of God, and which derogate from the equitable principles of his moral government, the notions of the Gnostics were only idle fables."

improvement of all. And they will chiefly prize and value those instructors who will teach them how to reconcile the hope of future happiness with the gratification of their passions. For this reason they will desert the simple intelligible doctrine of the gospel, and a serious plain practical ministry, and will delight in nothing but either the charms of eloquence, or those wild, abstruse, and fictitious notions which, while they perplex and confound their understandings, contribute nothing to the improvement of their character.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 4.

But be thou watchful upon all occasions⁴, endure evil treatment⁵, perform the work of an evangelist, fully execute thy ministry⁶. 5.

Let these considerations, Timothy, induce you to maintain a strict and habitual government over yourself, that you may not upon any occasion be thrown off your guard, or by inadvertence or imprudence discredit your profession and injure your usefulness. Let not your character be in the least degree assimilated to that of these false teachers. And keep a vigilant eye upon the churches intrusted to your care. Oppose to the utmost of your power the first symptoms of that evil spirit which I have described. You will meet with much opposition from the enemies of truth; you will be calumniated, insulted, and persecuted by those who, to answer their own sinister purposes, would debase and corrupt the gospel. Regard it not. Arm yourself with fortitude and Christian magnanimity. Be not dismayed. Resolve at all hazards to perform the whole, and every part of your duty, as a minister of the gospel, as an associate, and an authorized successor of the apostles. Shrink not from your appointed share, whether of labours or of sufferings; and aim at nothing but the complete discharge of the various and arduous duties of the province which has been assigned you, whatever be the consequence.

3. The apostle is the more earnest in his exhortation, from a conviction that his own season of service is drawing to a close: and he takes occasion

⁴ *Be watchful.*] *νηφε εν πασι*, "be thou sober on all occasions." Wakefield. "maintain a severe and universal temperance." Harwood. This is the proper sense of the word *νηφω*, and it is included in the exposition; but the word also signifies to watch, and this sense best suits the connexion. See Newcome, Benson, and Schleusner.—Timothy must be very much altered if he needed to be cautioned against intemperance. See 1 Tim. v. 23.

⁵ *Endure evil treatment.*] See Macknight. "patiently bear the ill treatment which the enemies of the gospel will give thee." "*κακοπαθησον*, endure hardship." Wakefield. "encounter difficulties." Harwood. "suffer hardships." Newcome.

⁶ *Fully execute thy ministry.*] *πληροφορησον*. "fulfill thy ministry." Newcome. Comp. ver. 17. "Perhaps *πληρωσον*, as Luke xiii. 25. Col. iv. 17." Mangey *apud* Bowyer.

Ch. IV. to express to the evangelist the high satisfaction which he feels in the review of his conduct, and his triumphant expectation of a future reward, ver. 6—8.

Ver. 6. *For the libation is already poured out upon my head¹, and the time of my departure is near.*

I am the more earnest, my dear friend, in these exhortations to diligence and fidelity, as I am very apprehensive that my season of service is drawing rapidly to a conclusion, when I shall no longer be able to assist you either by my advice or my example. My time of life, and my situation as a prisoner waiting for the judgement of the emperor, lead me to expect that my residence here will be but of short duration. I see the preparations made to offer me up. The libation is already poured upon the victim's head. I stand before the altar: and in a few short months, or perhaps weeks, the sacrifice will be complete. The fatal blow will be struck; and I shall bid adieu to this scene of warfare and suffering. But think not that I look forward to that awful hour with feelings of despondency or dismay. No;

7. *I have contended in a good cause, I have finished the race, I have*
8. *kept the faith². As to what remaineth, a crown of righteousness is reserved for me, which the Lord, the impartial judge³, will award to me in that day⁴, and not to me only, but to all those also who love his appearance.*

¹ *For the libation, &c.]* ἡδὴ σπενδομαι. “For the libation is already poured out upon my devoted head.” Harwood; who observes, that “it is a sacrificial term; that the apostle alludes to the libation that was poured on the victim before it was sacrificed.” “Σπενδω, *proprie libo: vinum effundo victimæ in honorem Dei. Metaphoricè, paulatim absumor, 2 Tim. iv. 6. Jam enim, omnes vires meæ sensim minuuntur et absumuntur.*” Schleusner. “*Jam nunc aspergor vino: præparor ad mortem, ut victimæ solent.*” Grotius. “I am now ready to be poured out.” Newcome. “as a libation upon God’s altar.” Doddridge.

Mr. Wakefield’s translation in his first edition was: “I am now pouring out my libation: *q. d.* in grateful acknowledgement to God for my victory.” The apostle represents himself as a conqueror at the games, who, having received his award, was offering his sacrifice, and preparing to depart. A very beautiful and interesting image. But the learned author, upon recollection probably conceiving that the original would not well bear that interpretation, altered his translation in his second edition to, *I am pouring out myself as a libation.* I follow the interpretation of Grotius and Harwood, who take the verb in a passive sense, and understand the apostle as describing himself as a victim standing before the altar, upon which the libation has been poured, and which is just ready for the knife.

² *I have kept the faith.]* “been faithful to my engagements, by an honourable observance of all the laws of the game.” Wakefield. See ii. 5. Dr. Benson denies that the expression τὴν πίσιν τετήρηκα can bear this sense, and interprets it “of faithfully discharging the duties of a high public station.” “I have maintained an inviolable fidelity.” Harwood.

³ *Impartial judge.]* “impartial umpire.” Wakefield. Dr. Benson says, “he here represents the great judge, who had been witness to all his behaviour, with a crown in his hand, which he will bestow upon him as the reward of his faithfulness and of his coming off victor.”

⁴ *In that day.]* “the great day of judgement;” “for so,” says Dr. Benson, “the phrase generally signifies throughout the New Testament.” “With what satisfaction,” says Dr.

Think not, Timothy, now that I am come to the close of life, and review my conduct as a preacher of the gospel, and an apostle of Christ, that I repent of my faithful adherence to my revered master, or that I regret any of the labours, or the sufferings, which I have undergone in his cause. No, my friend, I triumph in the recollection that I have successfully and perseveringly maintained, and am now concluding, an arduous but an honourable struggle with the enemies of the Christian faith; that I have now finished a glorious race which has required unintermitting vigilance, and has called forth all the energies of my soul. And I am proud to say, that I have resolutely and firmly adhered to the cause in which I was embarked, and to the principles with which I entered upon the contest; and that amidst great opposition, and many struggles, I have preserved the Christian doctrine pure and uncorrupted, and the liberties of the Gentile church inviolate. Nothing now remains but to receive the prize. Not indeed a chaplet of fading flowers, or withering leaves, but a diadem of everlasting glory and felicity, which my honoured Master, the impartial umpire of the course, who has been witness to my resolute and persevering efforts, will place upon my head in that day to which he has directed the hopes and expectations of his faithful servants: that awful, that delightful day, when he will himself appear to fulfill all his glorious promises, and when every honest exertion in his cause, and every sacrifice for truth and righteousness, shall meet with ample compensation, and be crowned with everlasting honour.

For be assured, Timothy, that this glorious prize is not limited to myself alone, or, to those who, like me, are apostles of Christ. It is held forth to you, to every faithful minister of the gospel, to every sincere and approved

Priestley in his note upon this text, "does the apostle here reflect upon his conduct as a preacher of the gospel! and what encouragement must this have given to Timothy, and ought to give to us to follow him in the same work of zeal and labour of love!" He adds, "I cannot help observing in this place, that the rewards which the apostle expected were, in his idea, to be conferred only at the time of the general resurrection, called, by way of eminence, *that day*, the time of the appearing of Jesus Christ, when he shall come to raise the dead and judge the world. Had he had any expectation of receiving the reward, or any part of the reward, of his labours immediately after death, he could not have been so ungrateful as to have entirely overlooked it."

There is little foundation for the remark of Dr. Doddridge upon this text, that "though it certainly proves that the great and most glorious reward of faithful Christians is referred to the day of general judgement, it would, nevertheless, be very precarious to argue from hence that there shall be no *prelibation* and *anticipation* of this happiness in a separate state. And when *the many texts* which have been so often urged in proof of that intermediate happiness are considered, it is surprising that any stress can be laid on the objection which can be drawn from such passages as this." It may surely be asked, where those *many texts* are to be found which speak of *prelibations* and *anticipations* of future happiness antecedently to the day of judgement.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 8.

disciple of Jesus in every age, who by a practical adherence to the profession of the gospel, and by earnest endeavours to extend its dominion to the utmost of his power, demonstrates that he has imbibed its spirit, lives under the influence of its awful expectations, and is supremely solicitous to obtain the final approbation of his Lord and Master. May you, my friend, by bearing a willing part in his labours and sufferings, make good your title to participate with him in his final and everlasting triumph.

SECTION IX.

THE APOSTLE expresses his earnest desire to see his friend: he gives a brief account of his present situation, and concludes with a salutation, a doxology, and the apostolic benediction. Ch. iv. 9—22.

1. The apostle expresses his earnest desire to see Timothy, and the rather as many had quitted him; and he requests that the evangelist would take the charge of certain articles which he had left at Troas, ver. 9—13.

9. *Do thy utmost to come to me speedily.*

Many of my associates and fellow-labourers have, for one reason or another, quitted my company, so that I am left alone here among strangers. Your society and assistance in these circumstances will be peculiarly acceptable to me. Endeavour therefore to come to Rome as soon as you conveniently can.

10. *For Demas hath forsaken me¹ through love of the present world, and is gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia².*

¹ *Demas, &c.*] Demas is mentioned with honour by the apostle in his epistle to Philemon, ver. 24, as his fellow-labourer in connexion with Mark and Luke; it is probable, therefore, that he soon recovered from his alarm, and returned to the apostle. See Lardner's *History of the Apostles*, vol. ii. p. 283, ed. 2.

² *Titus to Dalmatia.*] From the manner and connexion in which the name of this evangelist is here introduced, it is highly probable that he had made this excursion from timidity, and without the apostle's concurrence. Luke remained while the others fled, and it is not impossible that he might feel some resentment at the cowardice of his companions. This is the last we hear of Titus: it does not appear that he ever returned to the apostle, and possibly it was for this reason that his name is never once mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, which might be composed by Luke during his residence with Paul at Rome. The apostle, however, does not insinuate that either Titus or Crescens or Demas had apostatized from the faith; but he certainly gives no intimation that he had himself sent either of them upon an evangelical mission. Demas is mentioned with honour in connexion with Luke, Col. iii. 14. See also Benson

My situation here was so very perilous, that Demas, whose possessions and connexions in this world engross too great a share of his affections, took the alarm, and is gone to Thessalonica to be out of the way of danger. Crescens likewise, and even Titus, have left me: the former having returned to Asia, and the latter having crossed the sea into Dalmatia. I do not, however, doubt that they, the two latter at least, will employ themselves usefully in their respective stations, though I would rather have enjoyed their society, aid, and comfort, at Rome.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 10.

Luke only is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee: for he will be useful to me as a minister. 11.

All however have not deserted me. Luke, and he alone of my Asiatic friends, is still with me: the fearless associate of my labours and my dangers, and the faithful historian of my apostolic mission. In your way to Rome call upon Mark and bring him with you. Like Demas, he once deserted the service, being alarmed at the prospect of difficulties and perils³. But he has long since retrieved his character. And though I formerly declined his society, and even parted with Barnabas rather than I would accept the company of Mark, I now think very differently of him, and desire his presence and assistance as an active, faithful, and useful minister and associate.

And I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus⁴. 12.

He will set you at liberty and supply your place, so that when he arrives I hope you will set out immediately.

When thou comest, bring with thee the bag⁵ which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, but especially the parchments⁶. 13.

on 2 Tim. iv. 10. These circumstances favour the supposition that this epistle was written at the beginning of the apostle's first imprisonment, as stated in the introduction to this epistle.

³ *He once deserted.*] See Acts xiii. 13, xv. 38, 39.

⁴ *I have sent Tychicus.*] If Tychicus went to Ephesus, and was the bearer of this epistle to Timothy, he certainly returned to Rome before the end of the apostle's imprisonment, as he was, together with Onesimus, the bearer of the epistles to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and Philemon, which were all written a short time before the apostle's release. See Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7, 9; Philem. ver. 10, 22.

⁵ *The bag.*] “*φελονης, omne integumentum et involucrum alicujus rei.*” Schleusner. Probably the apostle means the cloke-bag or portmanteau which contained his books and parchments. It is hardly to be supposed that it could be an object of any importance to the apostle to send for an old cloke which he had left with his friend several years before. See Benson.

⁶ *Books and parchments.*] Books were probably manuscripts written upon a less durable substance, such as bark or papyrus. Parchment was more durable, and probably contained the more valuable writings. Learned men have trifled egregiously in conjecturing what these parchments contained. See Macknight. Benson on *Epistles*, vol. ii. p. 510. Troas, on account of the narrowness of the passage by sea, appears to have been frequented as a convenient sta-

Ch. IV.
Ver. 13.

You will pass through Troas in your way. Call at the house of Carpus, and bring with you the portmanteau and the books which I left under the care of that valuable friend some years ago. If you cannot bring all, I particularly request that you would at least bring the volumes which are written upon parchment, and which I value most. I foresee that my confinement here will probably be of some duration, and it will be convenient to have my books at hand.

2. The apostle warns Timothy against the wicked practices of Alexander, who was a bitter enemy to the apostle's doctrine, ver. 14, 15.

14. *Alexander the coppersmith¹ has done me great injury: the Lord will*
15. *reward him according to his works². Against whom be thou also upon thy guard, for he vehemently opposes our doctrine.*

This man is a bitter enemy to the gospel, and especially to the doctrine which you and I think it our duty to teach and to enforce, the perfect liberty of the gentile church. By his malicious opposition he has done me all the injury he could; and though, as I mentioned to you in a former letter, I have expelled him from the communion of the Christian church, and so far diminished his influence among professed believers, he seems to be exasperated rather than reformed by this measure of needful severity. I however have proceeded against him to the utmost limits of my apostolical authority. If he persist in his malignant and injurious conduct, he must be left in the hand of God, who will inflict upon him condign punishment. In the mean time be you upon your guard against his malice and enmity, and by prudence and firmness repel every attack, and deprive him of every advantage against you.

3. The apostle informs Timothy, that though he was deserted by his timid friends at his first appearance at the imperial tribunal, nevertheless God

tion for travellers who desired to cross from Asia into Greece. It was probably Timothy's best way to Rome as winter approached. The apostle Paul, in his way from Greece to Syria, though in haste, passed from Philippi to Troas. Acts xx.

¹ *Alexander the coppersmith.*] Probably the same man whom the Jews wished to bring forward during the tumult at Ephesus, Acts xix. 33; and the same whom the apostle had excommunicated as an apostate, 1 Tim. i. 20. He is supposed to have been a Jewish Gnostic. See Dr. Priestley on the text.

² *The Lord will reward him, &c.*] This is the reading of the Alexandrine, Ephrem, Clermont, and Corbey manuscripts. Griesbach marks it as of high authority; and it relieves the difficulty arising from the supposed execration of the apostle, which is expressed in the received text.

supported and rescued him, and that he continues to place entire confidence in the divine protection, ver. 16—18. Ch. IV.

At my first defence no one was with me, but all men forsook me³: may it not be imputed to their charge. Ver. 16.

When my cause was first brought to a hearing, the Christians here, as well as those who accompanied me from Asia, were seized with a sudden panic, and would not venture to appear with me in court, but left me to plead my cause alone. Such timid conduct was hardly to be expected from men who had made so many solemn professions of attachment to my person, and of zeal for truth. But the case was perilous, and human nature is frail. Their misconduct was the effect of timidity, not of insincerity. I heartily forgive them, and I pray God to forgive them too.

But the Lord stood by me⁴ and gave me strength; that by me the preaching of the gospel might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was rescued from the lion's mouth⁵. 17.

Though my friends deserted me, the Lord was at hand, and graciously inspired me with wisdom, courage, and eloquence, which raised me above the need of human support, and enabled me, in the presence of my accusers and my judges, to proclaim with such undaunted boldness and convincing energy the truths of the gospel, as produced the most salutary impressions upon all who heard me, and contributed to the object of my apostolical mission, in making known the Christian doctrine to all classes and descriptions of men, whether of high or low degree, whether Jews or heathen. The consequence of this defence was an immediate order for a relaxation of my confinement; and my unexpected escape from a situation so critical and hazardous, is like deliverance from the very jaws of a lion.

And the Lord will rescue me⁶ from every danger⁷, and will preserve me for his heavenly kingdom⁸. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 18.

³ *All forsook me.*] As the apostle was writing to Timothy, to whom the Roman converts were unknown, he probably alludes chiefly in this passage to the Christians who had been his companions out of Asia, and to whose firmness and friendship and zeal he no doubt principally looked for support. See Benson *ad fin.*

⁴ *The Lord stood by me.*] Perhaps the apostle means his master Jesus Christ, who had originally invested him with the apostolic office, and had frequently appeared to him in the course of his ministry; and who would no doubt be with him upon this important occasion. See 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9, Acts xxii. 18. But the expression is ambiguous.

⁵ *The lion's mouth.*] Mr. Wakefield understands this as a proverbial expression, and not as alluding to any individual, whether the emperor or his deputy; which, however, is the opinion of most expositors.

⁶ *The Lord, &c.*] See the note upon verse 17. The apostle at this time was uncertain of

Ch. IV.
Ver. 18.

The Lord, whom I faithfully serve, and who has hitherto been my powerful protector, will continue to protect me still: and while he has any work for me to perform, he will guard me from impending dangers, and will preserve and enable me to go through every labour which may be requisite for the promulgation of the gospel and the establishment of his kingdom in the world. And longer than this I desire not to live: for life is of no value when usefulness is ended. But in every situation, and to the remotest period of existence, I would acknowledge the goodness and celebrate the praises of him who honoured me with the apostolical mission, and who has hitherto preserved and encouraged me in the discharge of it. Amen.

4. The apostle concludes the epistle with salutations and a benediction, ver. 19—22.

19. *Salute Prisca¹ and Aquila, and the family of Onesiphorus².*

Remember me affectionately to those dear and venerable friends from whom I have received so much kindness, and to whose assistance I am so much indebted.

20. *Erastus³ remains at Corinth, but Trophimus I have left sick at Miletus⁴.*

It did not suit Erastus to accompany or to follow me to Rome, as I wished and he intended; the duties of his office constrained him to continue at Corinth. Trophimus would have been glad to have attended me throughout,

the issue of his imprisonment. In his letters to the Philippians, Colossians, &c., written above a year afterwards, he expresses great hope of release.

⁷ *From every danger.*] *εργα πονηρα*, evil work. See Wakefield.—“*Multi intelligunt de indigno quovis facinore, quod in se apostolus admittere posset: alii vero, de facinore quovis, quod in eum falsi fratres, aut nominis Christiani hostes machinari possent.*” Rosenmuller.

⁸ *Preserve me for his heavenly kingdom.*] *εις*, “that he will bring me safe to it.” Benson. Or perhaps that he will preserve me for it; for the purpose of promoting the progress of the gospel, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of righteousness and truth and peace in this world. *εις* sometimes signifies *in order to*. See Rom. i. 17, xvi. 26. See Macknight’s *Introd. Ess. 4*.

¹ *Prisca.*] In the Acts called Priscilla, which is probably a diminutive of the other. Acts xviii. 2, 26. See Benson. Dr. Owen takes Priscilla to be the true name, for which Prisca is an easy contraction. Bowyer.

² *The family, &c.*] Onesiphorus himself might be still at Rome; or at least not returned from his journey. See 2 Tim. i. 16.

³ *Erastus.*] He was chamberlain of Corinth, and is mentioned Acts xvi. 23, xix. 22.—The apostle perhaps had requested Erastus to meet him at Rome, expecting that the friendship and patronage of a person of his rank and consequence might be of some use to him in the imperial court.

⁴ *Miletus, &c.*] Grotius conjectures it should be *Μελιτη*, and supposes that Trophimus was left at Melita after the shipwreck. But Miletus was also a city in Crete, mentioned by Strabo and Pliny.

and he set off with me: but he fell sick by the way, and I was obliged to leave him at Miletus. Ch. IV.

*Do thy utmost to come to me before winter*⁵.

Ver. 21.

I am here a prisoner and almost alone. My old friends have left me, and I have not yet formed many new connexions. I shall therefore pass a solitary and uncomfortable winter if you and Mark do not give me your company. I again therefore request that you will set off as soon as possible after the receipt of this letter, and come to me at Rome before the stormy season sets in, and navigation becomes unpleasant and dangerous.

*Eubulus and Pudens, and Linus and Claudia*⁶, and all the brethren⁷ salute thee.

Our pious friends here, some of whom are persons of distinction, who have heard of your character and zeal, and who entertain a high respect for you, desire to be affectionately remembered to you.

The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit. Favour be with you. Amen.

22.

I conclude with the best wish I can form for you. May Jesus Christ, our great and common master, be with you, as he has been with me. May he be your instructor, protector, and comforter, as he has been mine. May he dispose and qualify you to preach his gospel with fidelity, courage, and success. And finally, may all who attend your ministry, and particularly the Christians at Ephesus, who have enjoyed the chief benefit of your evangelical ministrations, abundantly participate with you in the blessings of the everlasting gospel. Amen.

⁵ *Before winter.*] "From hence," says Dr. Benson, "we may conclude that this epistle was written some time in the spring or summer."

⁶ *Eubulus, Pudens, &c.*] "Pudens is said to have been of the senatorian order; and Claudia, a British lady converted by St. Paul; but without sufficient authority. Linus is said by the ancients to have been afterwards the first bishop of Rome." Benson.

⁷ *All the brethren.*] "This is an intimation that there were Christian brethren still at Rome, and that the whole church was not dispersed and broken up." Benson.

"No person," says Dr. Priestley, "can read these salutations from particular persons to particular persons, without being satisfied that this is a genuine epistle, written as other epistles of that age were. The circumstances of the cloke and other minute particulars, give us, however, no idea of his writing from inspiration, because we cannot imagine any want of it to such a man as Paul, in writing such an epistle as this; but that such a letter should be written by him in the circumstances in which he then was, is a very important consideration in favour of the truth of Christianity, because it cannot be accounted for without supposing the truth of the leading facts in the gospel history."

N.B. The Postscript is wanting in most of the ancient manuscripts and versions, and is not of the least authority. See Griesbach. It states that the Second Epistle to Timothy ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.

THE EPISTLE

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TITUS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

TITUS, to whom this epistle is addressed, was a Greek (Gal. ii. 3), and was probably converted from idolatry by the apostle Paul, who calls him his genuine son in the faith (Tit. i. 4); but the time of his conversion cannot be ascertained. It is a remarkable circumstance that Luke never mentions the name of Titus in his history; though it appears from the epistle that both of them were companions of the apostle¹, and were probably associated in the same ministry.

The name of Titus first occurs in the Epistle to the Galatians²; where it appears that he accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem A.D. 49 or 50, when they went up to consult the apostles concerning the obligation which the converted Gentiles were said to be under to submit to the Mosaic ritual; upon which occasion the apostle declares, that he would not suffer

¹ Probably to the church at Corinth, 2 Cor. viii. 16—18.

² Gal. ii. 3.

Titus to resign his Christian liberty in order to gratify the prejudices of the Jewish bigots. After this, we hear no more of him till the date of this epistle, though he was probably the occasional, if not the constant, attendant upon the apostle in his mission¹.

Luke gives no account in his history of the first promulgation of the gospel in Crete; and learned men have assigned different times for this event, according to their different hypotheses. It is a matter of little consequence. The opinion which appears to me the most probable, is that which represents the apostle as having made an excursion into Crete, in the course of the three years in which he resided principally at Ephesus. He went thither perhaps in the beginning of the year 56, or the latter end of 55, and took Titus with him; and having made a considerable number of converts, he returned to Ephesus, leaving Titus behind to settle the affairs of the church, and to establish good order and good morals among the new converts. Soon after his return he wrote this letter to Titus, to encourage and support him in those vigorous measures which it was necessary for him to adopt among a people so ignorant, vicious, and unruly. The apostle directs Titus to remain in Crete till he should be relieved by Tychicus or Artemas (ch. iii. 12), after which he desires him to come to him at Nicopolis, where he then proposed to pass the winter. But, having received a letter from the Corinthians soon after his return to Ephesus, and learning from their messengers the deplorable state of the church at Corinth, the apostle appears to have altered his plan. Deferring his intended journey to Corinth, he determined to remain at Ephesus till Pentecost (1 Cor. xvi. 5); and being solicitous to know what impression his epistle had made upon the Corinthians, he sent Artemas to relieve Titus², and directed that evangelist to go immediately to Corinth, and to meet him at Troas in the summer of A.D. 56 (2 Cor. ii. 12). Not finding Titus at Troas, he went forward to Macedonia, where it appears that he met this evangelist, who gave him an account upon the whole agreeable, though not altogether satisfactory, of the state of the Corinthian church. The apostle, having received this information, resolved to postpone his visit to Corinth for a year, and in the mean time he went probably into Dalmatia and Illyricum to preach the gospel, and took Titus with him. Upon his return to Macedonia, the apostle sent that

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 23. The apostle calls him his partner and fellow-labourer.

² Acts xx. 4. Tychicus went with Paul to Asia; probably, therefore, not Tychicus, but Artemas, had been sent to Crete to relieve Titus.

evangelist, together with Luke, and another eminent person, to carry his second epistle to the Corinthians, and to hasten their collection for the benefit of the Hebrew Christians ; recommending Titus to them as his partner and fellow-helper (ch. viii. 23). Soon afterwards the apostle came to Corinth himself³. The last mention which is made of Titus is 2 Tim. iv. 10 ; from which it appears that he had been with the apostle during his imprisonment at Rome, and that he went from him to Dalmatia, which Dr. Lardner regards as a presumptive argument that he had visited that country before. But whether Titus went upon this occasion with, or, without the approbation of the apostle, does not appear ; probably the latter, as the apostle complains of being deserted by every body but Luke. And this, perhaps, might be the reason why Luke, taking offence at Titus on account of his abandonment of the apostle in the season of danger, might purposely leave out his name in his history of the apostolic missions.

The design of the epistle is, to direct the evangelist to the choice of persons properly qualified to superintend the Christian churches, and to animate and support him in those vigorous measures which might be necessary to the preservation of order and discipline among the new converts from an unruly people ; and likewise to explain those relative and personal virtues upon which it would be necessary for the evangelist to insist, as indispensable requisites to the Christian character. It has been observed, that there is a remarkable resemblance between this epistle and the First Epistle to Timothy⁴, which was no doubt written nearly at the same time, and upon a similar occasion, but that the apostle is more concise in his exhortation

³ See Lardner's *Hist. of Apostles, &c.*, ch. xii. § 6 ; Benson's and Doddridge's Prefaces to the Epistle to Titus.

⁴ Archdeacon Paley, in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, has noticed the visible affinity between the Epistle to Titus and the First Epistle to Timothy, as a presumption in favour of the genuineness of both. He particularly mentions, that the writer accosts his two friends with the same salutations, and passes on to the business of his Letter with the same transition : 1 Tim. i. 2, 3, Titus i. 4, 5 ;—that the advice to both evangelists is similar, 1 Tim. i. 4, Titus iii. 9, 1 Tim. iv. 12, Titus ii. 15 ;—that the phrase “ this is a faithful saying,” occurs three times in the first epistle to Timothy, once in the second, and once in this, and in no other part of Paul's writings ;—that the word *sound*, as applied to words or doctrine, is used twice in the first epistle to Timothy, twice in the second, and three times in the epistle to Titus, and no where else in the New Testament ; and that the phrase *God our Saviour* is found only in these epistles. Also, that similar terms are employed in the epistle to Titus, and the first to Timothy, in describing the qualifications required in those who should be advanced to stations of authority in the church.

Hence the learned writer concludes, that the two epistles were written nearly at the same time, and both of them in the interval between the apostle's first and second imprisonment. The former supposition is indeed highly probable ; but it is an insurmountable objection against

to Titus, who was probably a man of considerable ability, and of greater age and experience than Timothy.

In the prosecution of his purpose, **FIRST**, The apostle, in the **INTRODUCTION** to the epistle, solemnly announces himself as the authorized teacher of that doctrine of life which, having been promised in past ages, had by Jesus Christ been explicitly revealed; and expresses his devout wishes for the happiness of his convert and his friend. Ch. i. 1—4.

SECONDLY. The apostle assigns his special reason for leaving Titus in Crete: namely, to appoint superintendants over the churches; which leads him to insist upon the qualifications necessary to the honourable and successful discharge of the episcopal or pastoral office. And he further takes notice of the peculiar difficulty which would attend the discharge of this office in Crete, arising from the profligate character of the Cretans themselves; which fully corresponded with the description given of them by one of their own poets, and which required uncommon vigilance, prudence, and fortitude, in those who were to be their instructors in the faith, the advocates of pure religion, and the guardians of Christian morals, ver. 5—16.

THIRDLY. The apostle directs the evangelist to enforce upon the aged and the young of both sexes, an habitual regard to the duties appropriate to their respective ages and characters. Ch. ii. 1—8.

FOURTHLY. He directs Titus to exhort slaves to obedience, meekness, and fidelity, upon evangelical principles. These exhortations he enforces by the consideration, that the design of the gospel is to redeem men of all ranks from the dominion of ignorance and vice, and to introduce all equally into a state of privilege and hope, ver. 9—15.

FIFTHLY. He exhorts subjects to obey their civil rulers, and to live in peace, and notices the great and beneficial change which a thorough conversion to the Christian religion introduces into the social state, and the unspeakable goodness of God in calling the Gentiles to the hope of life by Jesus Christ. Ch. iii. ver. 1—7.

SIXTHLY. The apostle directs professing Christians to follow useful and reputable occupations, and to avoid trifling disputes: he advises Titus to expel from the Christian community men of a contentious and contumacious

the latter, that the preaching of the gospel in Crete should have been delayed to so late a period. A more probable date has, I think, been assigned to both the epistles; but of this the reader will judge. Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. xiii.

spirit; and concludes the epistle with a charge to Titus to come to him at Nicopolis; commending to his notice Zenas and Apollos¹; repeating his exhortation to recommend industry to those who professed the Christian faith; and adding, finally, his salutations and benediction, ver. 8—15.

The epistle is said, in the Postscript, to have been written from Nicopolis²; but it is more probable that it was written from Ephesus in the spring of A.D. 56.³

¹ Apollos was certainly with the apostle at Ephesus when he wrote the First Epistle to the Corinthians; and as he declined going to Corinth, he might perhaps make a visit to Crete. 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

² There were several cities of that name; one in Thrace, which is the city supposed by Theodoret and Chrysostom to have been intended by the apostle: in this opinion they are joined by Lardner. Jerom understood it of Nicopolis in Epirus, which took its name from the victory at Actium. Paley agrees with Jerom.

³ Dr. Lardner places the date of this epistle A.D. 56, after the apostle left Ephesus. I follow Dr. Ashworth, who supposed it to have been written in the same year, *before* he left Ephesus. Dr. Doddridge thought it was written between the first and second imprisonment at Rome: Mill places it in 64, Pearson in 65. Lardner thinks it not probable that Crete should have remained so long without the knowledge of the gospel.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

SECTION I.

THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

1. **THE** apostle announces himself as the authorized teacher of that doctrine of life, which having, under the former dispensation, been the subject of promise, is now explicitly revealed by Jesus Christ, and expresses his devout wishes for the happiness of his convert and friend. Ch. i. 1—4. Ch. I.

PAUL, a servant¹ of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for promoting² the faith of the chosen of God, and the acknowledgement³ of the truth which promoteth godliness, (concerning the hope of everlasting life, which God, who cannot falsify, promised before the ancient dispensations⁴, but which promise⁵ he hath in its own times⁶ manifested by the preaching Ver. 1. 2. 3.

¹ *A servant.*] δαλος, a slave. "This is the only epistle of Paul in which he begins with calling himself a servant of God: 1 Pet. ii. 16. The apostle might allude to the case of the Hebrew slave, who, when he might have had his liberty in the seventh year, declared he loved his master and would not be released, but obliged himself to be a servant for life." Benson.

² *For promoting.*] κατα πισιν, according to the faith. κατα ευσεβειαν, according to godliness; i. e. which promotes faith and godliness. Vide Doddridge, Worsley, Raphelius. "Not according to, but for promoting of: place ver. 2, 3, in a parenthesis." Owen ap. Bowyer.—Griesbach begins the parenthesis at κατα.

³ *Acknowledgement.*] επιγνωσιν, "agnitio, verius quam cognitio." Erasmus.—To acknowledge is a stronger expression than knowledge (γνωσις): it signifies not only to know, but to admit and embrace it. 2 Cor. i. 13, 14. See Benson.

⁴ *Before the ancient dispensations.*] So Newcome. "χρονων αιωνιων, before the secular ages." Benson. i. e. before the times or jubilees under the law: vide Benson's note.

⁵ *But which promise.*] "but hath manifested his word." Newcome. λογον, "promise," Wakefield, Macknight.

Ch. I. *which hath been committed to me according to the appointment of God our*
 Ver. 4. *Saviour,) to Titus, my genuine son*¹, *in the common faith*², *favour and*
*peace*³ *from God our father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*⁴ *our Saviour.*

The apostle, intending to give directions to Titus concerning a proper choice of persons to superintend the affairs of Christian societies, and to preach the gospel in Crete, very properly introduces this advice, by announcing his own official and sacred character, and giving a brief and comprehensive summary of the doctrine he taught.

He first professes himself to be the servant of God, his property, his redeemed, devoted, willing *slave*; subject to his unlimited and uncontrouled authority, and acknowledging no other rule of conduct than his will and pleasure.

Of Jesus Christ he declares himself to be an *apostle*, appointed to that high and honourable office by Jesus Christ himself; who, after his resurrection, had appeared to him for that purpose, and had given him a charge to preach the gospel to the heathen.

The design of his mission was, to *promote the faith of the chosen of God*; it was to establish the faith of those who already believed, and who, publicly professing the Christian doctrine, had been admitted into the society of those who are described as having been chosen by God out of the idolatrous and unbelieving world, to enjoy the privileges and hopes of the gospel.

But the apostle's mission further extended to the instruction of those who were not yet enlightened, who having been chosen were by him to be invited to the belief and profession of the gospel. He taught the gospel alike to the idolatrous heathen, and to the prejudiced Jews; and he taught it not as a matter of speculation, but as a great energetic practical principle of virtue and piety.

And the doctrine which the apostle taught related chiefly to that *hope of everlasting life, which God, who could not falsify, had promised*. Christianity produces its effect upon the hearts and lives of men, by revealing the

⁶ *Its own times.*] *καιροῖς ἰδίοις*, in his own proper time. "Perhaps he alludes to prophecies, particularly Daniel's seventy weeks." Benson. "in due time." Newcome. So Castalio, Beza. "in its season." Wakefield.

¹ *Genuine son.*] *γεννησιῶν* i. e. one who holds the Christian doctrine in the purity in which it was taught by the apostle. "my own son." Newcome. "my true son." Wakefield.

² *Common faith.*] *κοινὴν*, faith common to Jews and Gentiles. This phrase is not used to Timothy, but to Titus a Gentile Christian, and therefore particularly proper and beautiful. See Benson.

³ *Favour and peace.*] *ελεος*, *mercy*, is wanting in the best copies. Vide Benson, Mill, Griesbach.

⁴ *Lord Jesus Christ.*] *Κυρίῳ*, *Lord*, is wanting in the Alexandrine MS., and in the Coptic and Vulgate versions. Vide Benson and Griesbach.

unspeakably important doctrine of an everlasting state of righteous retribution. This it is which distinguishes the gospel from every other system of philosophy and moral instruction. It places the expectation of a life to come, upon the promise of a faithful and unchangeable God; and it is by the hopes and fears of a future life thus authoritatively confirmed, that the Christian religion produces its beneficial effects upon the heart, and makes men wiser and better.

This promise was made *antecedently to the ancient dispensations*. The expression is somewhat obscure. It signifies literally, *before eternal times*. Hence some have dreamed of what they call an eternal covenant of redemption; that is, of some mysterious transaction between the Father and the Son for the salvation of men, from all eternity, before time began. Others, with better appearance of reason, have understood the phrase of the promise which God made to Adam after the Fall, previously to the patriarchal or the Mosaic dispensations. The more probable interpretation is, that the apostle alludes to the promise which was made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the ancient patriarchs, before the giving out of the law upon Mount Sinai. It may be rendered, "the times of the ages." And it is well known, that age is often put for dispensation, and the plural sometimes for the singular. And the apostle, in most of his epistles, appeals to the promise of God to Abraham, that in him should all families of the earth be blessed, Gen. xii. 3, as a summary and promise of the gospel antecedently to the promulgation of the law. Most probably, therefore, he alludes to the same promise here.

It was then obscurely insinuated; it is now explicitly revealed. God, in his own time, under the gospel dispensation, which was promulgated at that time, which, to his unerring wisdom, appeared most expedient, has published to all mankind the promise, which was before known to few, and has authorized his holy servant and apostle to proclaim the glad tidings to all mankind without distinction; thus approving himself to be the faithful God, the Saviour, the deliverer of the Jew from the bondage of the law, and of the heathen from the yoke of idolatry and vice, and introducing all into a state of liberty, of reconciliation and of hope.

The apostle, invested with the high commission to proclaim these joyful tidings, addresses himself in the beginning of this epistle, to Titus, his *genuine son in the faith*, whom he had converted from error to truth, from immorality to virtue, from the worship of idols to the knowledge of the living and the true God; and who approved himself the genuine disciple

CH. I.
Ver. 4.

of the apostle, by adhering stedfastly to the doctrine which he had received from him, neither blending it with heathen philosophy, nor corrupting it with Jewish superstition. He addresses Titus as his genuine son in the *common faith*, in that faith which was intended for the benefit of the Gentile as well as the Jew; in that gospel which promised eternal life to all of every nation who received its doctrines, and who yielded a practical subjection to its authority; and to this beloved son, as the best expression of his affectionate and paternal regard, he wishes grace and peace, in the continued possession of his interest in the gospel, of that gift which originated in infinite mercy, and which is productive of unspeakable peace and satisfaction of mind; a blessing which we derive from God, who acknowledges the endearing relation of a father to the Christian family, who are thus raised to partake of the adoption and inheritance of sons; and from the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we acknowledge as our master, and who was commissioned by his heavenly father to save us from vice and ruin, and to raise us to knowledge, to virtue, and to immortality.

SECTION II.

THE APOSTLE gives Titus some directions concerning the election of proper persons to superintend the churches of Crete, an office which the notorious vices of the Cretans made it necessary to fill with persons of the greatest prudence and respectability of character. Chap. i. ver. 5—16.

1. The apostle describes the qualifications of the man who was worthy of being selected for the episcopal office, ver. 5—9.

5. *For this purpose I left thee in Crete, that thou mightest proceed to set right¹ what was left undone², and mightest appoint³ elders in every city as I gave thee in charge.*

¹ *Proceed to set right.*] So Wakefield. “*pergas corrigere.*” Erasmus. See Macknight.—“*Ut reliqua pergas ordinare. To επι in compositione significat interdum post alium venire, et in opere ejus immutare quid, aut ei supplementum addere.*” Rosenmuller.

² *To set right what was left undone.*] So Wakefield. “set right the things that are wanted.” Newcome. Dr. Priestley observes: “It is evident that elders and bishops were the same persons, for in one verse they are called elders and in the next verse bishops; and as every city or town, for there were no great cities in the island, had bishops, it is evident that they could not be diocesan bishops having ministers of other churches subordinate to them.”

³ *Appoint.*] The apostle gives no hint that the concurrence of the members of the society

My numerous engagements making it necessary for me to return to Ephesus before I had organized the many converts to Christianity in the different towns of Crete into regular societies, and appointed the proper superintendants, being well satisfied with regard to your prudence, activity, knowledge and zeal, I left you behind, Titus, my beloved associate, to finish this important work; and I now renew the charge which I gave you at my departure, that you will immediately proceed to select the most prudent and respectable characters in each society to superintend its spiritual concerns.

Ch. I.
Ver. 5.

If any one be irreproachable, the husband of one wife⁴, having children who are believers, not accused of dissoluteness, nor disobedient⁵.

6.

One of the first qualifications of a man who is selected to superintend the church is, that he be unblameable in the management of his own family; one who has no more than one wife, who is neither a polygamist, nor divorced from his first wife without sufficient reason, and married to another. If he have children, it must appear that he has brought them up in the knowledge of truth and the practice of virtue. The children of a Christian bishop must not be idolatrous heathen, they must not lie under the reproach of dissipation and riot, they must not be undutiful to their parents. For how shall he be able to govern the church, who cannot support discipline in his own house?

For the bishop⁶ must be irreproachable, as the steward of God.

7.

The man whom you appoint to be the overseer of the church, to instruct the ignorant, to confirm the wavering, to administer Christian ordinances, to lead the devotions of his fellow-worshippers, and to support discipline in the new-formed church, by whatever name he is called, whether elder or bishop, whether there be one only, or whether two or more are united in the same important charge, must be a person of unblemished morals, both in his personal and relative capacity; for he is the steward of God, appointed

would be necessary to give validity to the appointment of Titus. Probably the Cretans were too ignorant and too imperfectly reclaimed from their vices, and likewise too much under the influence of judaizing zealots, to be capable of making a proper choice for themselves.

⁴ *Of one wife:]* i. e. of one wife at a time. The apostle did not mean to condemn second marriages, much less to prohibit marriage altogether to the priesthood. Whitby appeals to the authority of Chrysostom, Œcumenius, and Jerom.

⁵ *Disobedient.]* Dr. Priestley observes, that "Christianity did not act as a charm, or suddenly, but gradually, there being in the first place a change of belief, or speculative principles only, and these producing in time a change of conduct."

⁶ *For the bishop.]* "this overseer of the church." Wakefield. Compare ver. 5. From hence it is clear, that in the apostolic age an elder and a bishop were synonymous terms. Compare Acts xx. Whitby admits that the names were then common; which he states as the opinion of Chrysostom, Theodoret, and others.

Ch. I. to dispense the truths of the gospel, and the riches of divine mercy by
Ver. 7. Jesus Christ: the dignity of his character therefore must correspond with that of his office.

- 7. *Not self-willed¹, not prone to anger², not one who sits long over wine, no striker, not greedy of dishonourable gain.*

The man who undertakes the superintendence of the church must not be one who insists upon having his own way in every thing, who will never yield either his inclination or his opinion to those of others, obstinate in his purpose, morose in his manners, and haughty in his demeanour; he must not take fire upon every slight provocation, and resent every supposed affront; he must not be addicted to drinking, unwilling to leave his wine, valuing himself upon his taste and judgement in intoxicating liquors, or upon the quantity which he can swallow; he must be no brawler, but must keep at the utmost distance from that quarrelling and fighting which is the general and almost inevitable consequence of hard drinking. And finally, he must be perfectly clear from that low vice, the love of mean and dishonourable gain, to which the Cretans are so much addicted, that there is no baseness to which they will not submit if they can get any thing by it.

8. *But a friend to hospitality³, a lover of goodness⁴, self-governed⁵, just,*
9. *holy, temperate; holding fast the true doctrine⁶ as he hath been taught, that he may be able⁷ both to encourage by wholesome instruction, and to confute those who contradict.*

On the contrary, the man who deserves to be selected by you to this honourable office must be attentive to strangers, and willing to receive

¹ *Not self-willed.*] αυθαδης, "obstinate, morose, and arrogant." Doddridge; who observes, that "Raphelius, in his Notes from Herodotus, has taken great pains to show that this is the proper signification of the word."—"Sibi placens, in cuius gestu, sermone, vultu, quid tumidum et præfractum apparet, quod est indicium animi plus æquo placentis sibi." Rosenmuller.

² *Not prone to anger.*] So Macknight. "not passionate." Wakefield. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 26.

³ *A friend to hospitality.*] This was a necessary virtue where there were no public accommodations for strangers as in modern times. "Not in the modern sense of hospitality," says Whitby: "that is, a great table for persons of quality to come to."

⁴ *A lover of goodness.*] So Wakefield. "a lover of good men." Newcome.

⁵ *Self-governed.*] So Newcome. σωφρονα, "chaste." Wakefield. "prudent." Macknight and Benson. Macknight observes, "It consists in the government of the angry passions: differing from εγκρατη, which signifies one who bridles his appetites."

⁶ *Holding fast.*] Αντεχομενον "signifies holding fast, in opposition to one who would wrest it from him." Macknight. πιστη λογος, "true doctrine." Wakefield, Macknight, Newcome. Benson paraphrases it, "one who is tenacious of the Christian revelation as I taught it among them."

⁷ *That he may be able.*] "that he may be able to encourage some by wholesome instruction, and to confute others who contradict." Wakefield. Compare this description of the qualifications of an elder or bishop with that given by the apostle to Timothy, 1 Tim. iii. 1—7.

and to entertain them according to his ability; he must delight in acts of kindness, in the society of the wise and good, loving goodness wherever he finds it; he must subdue all the inferior powers into unresisting subjection to the laws of reason and virtue; he must be correct in all his transactions with others; must maintain a sanctity of character, as becomes a member of the Christian community, and be moderate in the enjoyment of innocent gratifications. And finally, he must adhere strenuously to the word of truth, the genuine doctrine of the gospel which I first taught, and which you continue to preach, without corrupting it by any foreign mixture, either from the Jewish or the heathen schools. And thus he will be qualified to administer instruction and consolation to those who are upright in their profession, which will promote their moral health and vigour; and to confute the ignorance and bigotry of others who would oppose and adulterate the gospel.

Ch. I.
Ver. 9.

2. It was necessary to be careful in the selection of proper persons to act as elders or bishops in the churches of Crete, on account of the profligate characters of the Cretans themselves, and the perverse zeal of the judaizing teachers, ver. 10—16.

For many are unruly⁸, vain talkers⁹, and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision¹⁰. Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole families¹¹, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonourable gain.

10.

11.

It is the more necessary to appoint men of great respectability of character to be the teachers and pastors of the churches, because there are many who are taking great pains to corrupt the gospel of Christ, and to seduce the unwary from the path of pure Christianity. There are many who will not submit themselves readily either to your authority, Titus, or to mine; who are filling the minds of those who listen to them with crude and mischievous notions; who endeavour to pervert the understandings of their hearers. Some of them are heathen philosophers, but I principally allude

⁸ *Unruly.*] *αυτοτακτοι*, "very unmanageable persons." Benson.

⁹ *Vain talkers.*] "persons who utter a multitude of foolish and trifling things on the subjects whereof they speak." Macknight.

¹⁰ *Those of the circumcision.*] This seems to imply that the gospel had been preached some time in Crete to give the Judaizers an opportunity of making proselytes. Perhaps the apostle means unconverted Jews; who we know would from the beginning be very active in their opposition to the gospel.

¹¹ *Whole families.*] "It appears from hence," says Dr. Benson, "that some whole families of Gentile Christians had gone off and joined the Judaizers." *Subvert*: "a metaphor taken from those who overturn houses by sapping the foundation." Macknight.

Ch. I.
Ver. 11.

to Jewish zealots, who wish to combine the bondage of the law with the liberty of the gospel. You must appoint teachers, whose reputation and whose doctrine will bear down the absurdity of these bigots, who, if they are left to themselves, will undermine the principles of the new converts, and seduce whole families to their pernicious principles. And I can assure you that these fanatical teachers, notwithstanding all their pretended zeal, have no other motives, but to make a trade of their profession, and to enrich themselves at the expense of their hearers.

12. *One of themselves, a teacher¹ of their own, hath said, The Cretans have ever been liars², mischievous brutes, greedy gluttons³.*

This character is given of them by their own poet: "The Cretans are a lying, savage, intemperate, brutal people;" and you know that this is the opinion universally entertained of them.

13. *This testimony is true; for which cause, rebuke them sharply⁴, that*
14. *they may be sound in the faith, not attending to Jewish fables, and to the commandments of men⁵ who apostatize⁶ from the truth.*

I cannot but admit the truth of this description of the Cretans by their national poet. You plainly perceive, therefore, what sort of men you have to deal with, so that you must speak out boldly; it will not do to temporize, and flatter and countenance them in their criminal practices. You must tell them plainly that Christianity positively requires the entire renunciation of all these odious vices, and the habitual, uniform practice of virtue; and that no positive rites, not even such as have been appointed by God himself, and

¹ *A teacher.*] προφητης. So Wakefield.—"a poet." Newcome; who observes, "they are called prophets from their pretensions to inspiration." "The person here referred to is generally supposed to be Epimenides; and if so, the propriety of the epithet προφητης rather than ποιητης may easily be discovered from Diog. Laertius in *Vit. Epimenidis*." Dr. Owen *apud* Bowyer.

² *Ever been liars.*] "They had the reputation of liars, from their saying what was true, viz. that Jupiter, who was worshiped in Greece, was born and died among them, and from their showing his sepulchre." Priestley; who remarks that "this letter was a private one, not to be communicated to the persons whose characters are thus described; and consequently that it was not designed for the use of posterity, though in the course of divine providence it has been happily preserved to us." See Benson, and Warburton *apud* Benson. "Polybius," says Dr. Owen, "often mentions the Cretans, but scarcely ever without reproach." Bowyer.

³ *Greedy gluttons.*] γαστρες αργαι. "greedy bellies." Wakefield. *Swift gluttons*: "i. e. insatiable devouring gluttons." Benson, from Dr. Jeremiah Hunt. "slow, that is, idle indolent gluttons." Newcome.

⁴ *Sharply.*] αποτομως, cut them to the quick, that the sound and healthy part be kept from infection. See Benson.

⁵ *Commandments of men:*] whether relating to holy times, or to distinctions of food, &c. Compare Rom. xvi. See Newcome.

⁶ *Who apostatize.*] "who turn themselves from the truth." Wakefield.

much less Jewish traditional precepts and Pharisaic ceremonies, will be of the least avail to their acceptance with God, without sincere and deep repentance. Thus, by probing their vices to the quick, and cutting out the gangrene, you will introduce sound principle and a healthy state of mind; and will teach them to treat these mercenary apostates, together with their idle tales, and their unauthorized impositions, with the contempt they deserve.

Ch. I.
Ver. 14.

To the pure all things are pure; but to the polluted, and the unfaithful⁷, nothing is pure; but even their understanding and conscience are polluted. 15.

To the enlightened and practical believer all days are equally holy, and all kinds of food are equally lawful and innocent; but to him who corrupts the faith, and who, from secular motives, introduces Jewish rites into the Christian system, all things are impure; every day is unholy, every action is criminal; his intentions are evil, his motives are base, his affections are depraved, and his whole character and conduct is offensive in the sight of God.

They profess to know God, but in their actions they deny him; they are odious and untractable⁸, and approve themselves by no one good work. 16.

These false teachers, who would mix Judaism with Christianity, make a great parade of their being the true worshipers of God, and represent themselves as the only persons authorized to teach religious truth; but their conduct gives the lie to their profession. In practice they are atheists, and by the indulgence they allow to their vicious propensities, they plainly show that their profession is insincere; for their vices are odious, their conduct insolent and ungovernable, and with all their pompous profession of superior knowledge of the gospel, they have not a single good quality to atone for the long and black catalogue of their crimes.

⁷ *Unfaithful.*] So Benson; who observes, "that they appear to have known and believed right, but to have acted wrong."

⁸ *They are odious and untractable.*] So Wakefield. "βδελυκτοί, digni quos omnes execrentur, exosi Deo et hominibus. αδοκιμοί, inutiles sicut nummi qui rejiciuntur." Rosenmüller. —worthless.

SECTION III.

Ch. II. *THE APOSTLE directs the Evangelist to enforce upon the aged and the young of both sexes the duties of their respective stations and characters, and to be himself an example of Christian virtue. Ch. ii. 1—8.*

1. He tells him what advice to give to men advanced in life, ver. 1, 2.
Ver. 1. *But speak thou the things which become wholesome doctrine*¹.

Having stated the qualifications and duties of bishops and pastors, allow me now to address a few words of exhortation, Titus, to yourself. And first of all, pay no regard to those airs of superiority which the false teachers affect, and by no means imitate them in representing rites and ceremonies as substitutes for moral duties; but teach that doctrine which alone is truly healthful to the mind, however unpalatable to the impostor and the hypocrite; enforce the truth, that there is no salvation without sincere repentance and the practice of substantial virtue and piety, and that every one must faithfully perform the duties of his station.

2. *That the elderly men*² *be sober, grave, self-governed, sound in faith, in love, in patience.*

Admonish those men who are advanced in life, especially such as may be appointed to offices in the church, to keep themselves at all times perfectly sober, never to indulge in any excess; also to be vigilant and attentive to the duties of their office; to maintain a grave and dignified deportment, and not to allow themselves in levities which in youth might perhaps be pardonable. Let them govern their tempers and their appetites, and keep them in due subjection to the dictates of reason and the law of God. Let their faith be not merely speculative, much less corrupt, but pure, vigorous, operative and salutary. Let their love be not pretended, but sincere; not partial, but uni-

¹ *Wholesome doctrine.*] ὡγιαίνουσα. "True doctrine is called *wholesome*, because it invigorates the faculties of the soul, and keeps them in a healthy state." Macknight. Dr. Benson observes, that in this chapter the apostle shows Titus what he himself was to teach, as he had shown him in the preceding what the bishops should teach.

² *Elderly men.*] Πρεσβυτάς is here understood to signify the deacons or other officers of the church, by Hammond, Le Clerc, and some of the ancients. Macknight would translate it *elders*; and observes, that the advice given to them is the same as that given to elders and deacons. 1 Tim. iii. 2, 8. Dr. Benson remarks, that "Titus is not directed to treat the old men as *fathers*, &c. He was now older than Timothy was when St. Paul wrote his first epistle to him, and might therefore be supposed capable of acting with more prudence and authority."

versal. Let them love God with their whole heart, and their neighbours as themselves; and let them bear, with dignified composure, the infirmities and sorrows of declining years; and not, by peevishness and fruitless complaints, increase their sufferings, lessen their character, and occasion additional trouble to those whose office it is to attend their persons, to administer to their wants, and to relieve their infirmities.

Ch. II.
Ver. 2.

2. The aged women are to be admonished to perform their duty, and particularly to instruct the younger persons of their own sex, ver. 3—5.

That the elderly women³ likewise be in behaviour⁴ as becometh holy persons⁵, not slanderers, not addicted to excess of wine⁶, teachers of that which is right.

3.

Admonish women advanced in life, and especially those who are appointed to offices of importance in the church, with regard to their own sex, to dress with propriety, and to regulate their general behaviour by the principles of the Christian religion, which prohibits its professors from conforming in an excessive degree to the follies and fashions of the world, especially when the time of life and dignity of station may be expected to elevate the mind to better things. Let them be tender of the characters of others, remembering how difficult it is to recover a lost reputation; let them not, therefore, wantonly or maliciously circulate, much less invent, reports to the prejudice of their neighbours. Let them also, above all things, abstain from drunkenness, a vice odious and contemptible in all, particularly in the female sex, and most of all in those who are advanced in life, and who sustain offices which require the greatest decorum and propriety of behaviour. And let them fulfill the duties of their years, and of their office, in instructing young persons of their own sex how to conduct themselves in a decent, honourable, and Christian manner.

That they may form the minds⁷ of the young women to love their hus-

4.

³ *Elderly.*] So Wakefield. It is supposed that the apostle here alludes to deaconesses: an office known to exist in the primitive church. Rom. xvi. 1.

⁴ *In behaviour.*] κατασηματι. it extends to dress and personal appearance in general.—“*In habitu cultuque corporis qui Christianos decet.*” Schleusner. “*Vox κατ. latius hic sumitur: nec amictum tantum, sed et gestum, incessum, vultum, &c. complectitur.*” Rosenmuller.

⁵ *Holy persons.*] “sacred persons, because employed in sacred offices.” Macknight. Compare 1 Tim. iii. 11.

⁶ *Not addicted.*] Gr. enslaved. Newcome.—“*Non temere præcipiendum hoc ait ætatis pro- vectioris feminis.* Χαιρει τῷ οἶνῳ ἢ ἡλικίᾳ αὐτῆς. Schol. Vet. Hom.” Rosenmuller.

⁷ *Form the minds.*] σωφρονίζωσι. See Newcome's margin. “that they may instruct.” “persuade.” Macknight. “σωφ. facere ut quis sapiat, hortari, docere.” Rosenmuller.—“*ut prudentiam doceant adolescentulas.*” Vulgate.

Ch. II. *bands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, well employed at*
 Ver. 5. *home*¹, *submissive to their husbands, that the doctrine of God be not evil*
*spoken of*².

Let elderly women, and especially those matrons who are appointed, in consequence of superior years and experience, to superintend and instruct the younger persons of their own sex, instruct and admonish the young married women to be kind and affectionate to their husbands, whether Christians or heathen; to love their children, and to manifest their maternal affection by contributing cheerfully to their support, and especially by instilling into their tender minds the principles of virtue and genuine Christianity, to command their passions, and, even under great provocation, to be meek and gentle; to abhor every thing that is inconsistent with the most delicate sentiments of honour and virtue; to live much at home, and in the prudent faithful discharge of domestic duties; and, from a regard to the will of God, to yield that subjection to their husbands which the reason of things and the custom of the country require; so that the doctrine of Christianity may not be traduced, as relaxing the duties of relative life, but may be the more approved and admired the better it is understood, as being the best source of domestic peace and union.

3. Titus is directed what advice he is to give to young men, ver. 6.

6. *In like manner, exhort the young men to be self-governed.*

Admonish the young men to lay a proper restraint upon their appetites and passions, and to maintain that strict discipline over the mind which will be productive of inward peace, and will display itself in a consistent and dignified behaviour, that will do credit to their Christian profession.

4. The apostle urges the evangelist to be himself an example of every Christian virtue, ver. 7, 8.

7. *In all things show thyself*³ *a pattern of good works; in teaching, uncor-*

¹ *Well employed at home.*] οἰκουργός. So the Alexandrine, Ephrem, and many of the best copies read, instead of οἰκάρης, *keepers at home*, which is the reading of the received text.—οἰκουργός ἀγαθός, “good œconomists.” Worsley. “well employed:” this is the punctuation of Hen. Steph. See Bowyer. If ἀγαθαί is kept separate, it signifies *good, benign*.

² *The doctrine of God be not evil spoken of.*] “This caution is given in opposition to the error that the gospel set its professors free from human relations.” Newcome. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 1.

³ *Show thyself.*] So Wakefield. Gr. “showing.”

*ruptness*⁴, *gravity, wholesome doctrine, which cannot be condemned*⁵, *that he who opposeth it may be ashamed, having no evil to say of us*⁶. Ch. II. Ver. 8.

If, Titus, you expect to do any good by your teaching, you must follow it up by a good example; and that not only in one or two instances, but in the habitual practice of all the virtues of the Christian character. And particularly with regard to your public instruction, do not presume to corrupt the pure word of God with any human mixtures, in order to make it more palatable to your hearers. Teach it with becoming gravity, mindful both of the Being in whose name you speak, and of the great importance of the message which you have to deliver. Let your doctrine be salutary and practical, such as will bring the mind into a healthy active state; let it be free from all unnecessary harshness and asperity of language; let it have a direct tendency to make your hearers wiser and better; and let it be so temperate and guarded that no one will dare, or be able, to find fault with it; so that the spiteful, bigoted, judaizing teachers, the enemies of the gospel, who are also your enemies and mine, may blush with shame and remorse, when they see, that after all the calumnies they have propagated, they can really allege nothing truly blame-worthy against our character or our language, and that our innocence and prudence is an impenetrable shield against the venomous shafts of their inveterate malice.

⁴ *Uncorruptness.*] With Newcome I read *αφθοριαν*, which has the sanction of the most ancient copies. The received text reads *αδιαφθοριαν*, “*in doctrina integritatem.*” Schleusner.—Mr. Wakefield conjectures that the true reading is *αδιαφοριαν*, *quæ sine respectu personarum se gerit, neque minus pauperi consulit quam diviti, potentique.*” *Sylva Critica*, P. i. p. 71. In thy doctrine impartial.

⁵ *Which cannot be condemned.*] “Possibly Titus, who was a Gentile convert, and who had no prejudices in favour of the Judaizers, might be in some danger of speaking with some harshness of them, and of their wicked attempts; and in the warmth of his zeal he might be led to say things which had better not have been said. Or at least the fear of such impropriety of language might lead the apostle to give him this caution.” Benson.

⁶ *Of us.*] All the ancient copies read *ἡμῶν*, *us*, instead of *ὁμῶν*, *you*, which is in the received text. See Griesbach.

SECTION IV.

Ch. II. *THE APOSTLE states the instructions which are to be given to servants, and the peculiar motives by which they are to be enforced, and encourages Titus to zeal and fidelity. Ch. ii. 9—15.*

1. The apostle details the instructions which it would be proper to give to servants, ver. 9, 10.

Ver. 9. Exhort¹ *bond-servants*² to be submissive to their own³ masters, to be
10. *desirous of pleasing them in all things, not contradicting, not secretly stealing*⁴, but showing the utmost fidelity⁵, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

There are some who represent the Christian religion as dissolving all civil obligations, and who teach that Christian servants and Christian slaves, upon their profession of the Christian faith, are released from obedience to their masters and immediately acquire a title to personal liberty. But though Christianity redeems men from spiritual bondage, it leaves their civil and political condition as it found it, only operating a gradual improvement by the gentle but powerful influence of moral principles. It requires, therefore, the faithful discharge of the proper duties of a servant to a master, enforcing those obligations by additional motives peculiar to itself. Let Christian slaves, therefore, be taught that they owe entire obedience to their masters in all things lawful, whether those masters be heathen or Christian, and as much after their conversion to Christianity as in their heathen state; and let them know that their subjection to Christ, our common master, by no means releases them from their antecedent duties. Let them also be taught, that they must be desirous of pleasing their masters, that they must study

¹ Exhort.] “Supply παρακαλει from ver. 6.” Newcome.

² Bond-servants.] δουλους, slaves.

³ Their own.] ιδιαις, own masters: not only to Christ their common Master, but to the individuals whose slaves they are.

⁴ Secretly stealing.] νοσφιζομενους, stealing privately through fear of detection. Compare Acts v. 3.—“not thieving.” Newcome.—“not wasting or privately embezzling their masters’ goods.” Benson.

⁵ The utmost fidelity.] Gr. “showing all good fidelity.” So Newcome.—“the utmost faithfulness.” Wakefield.

their tempers, their situation, and their wants, and endeavour, if possible, to anticipate their wishes; if they find any of them morose in their temper, unreasonable in their injunctions, or harsh in their language, they must bear all with meekness and gentleness; and, how grievous soever the provocation, must carefully refrain from the use of all petulant and reproachful retorting, and from all dishonest and undutiful conduct. Whenever their masters' property is trusted to their care, they must not presume, they must not even think of secreting any part to their own use, how secure soever they may be from detection. In every concern they must act with the strictest fidelity, that they may adorn the Christian religion, that they may lead men to think well of the gospel and its professors, and thus manifest their gratitude to God, who has saved them, by the gospel of his son, from the bondage of heathenism, and has brought them into a state of liberty, hope, virtue, and happiness.

Ch. II.
Ver. 10.

2. It is a great motive to the performance of these duties, that the blessings of the gospel are extended to all without distinction of rank, and that the great design of it is, to render all who profess it virtuous and happy, by the awful and animating expectations which it excites, ver. 11—14.

For the favour of God, which bringeth salvation⁶ to all men, hath shone forth⁷.

11.

The gospel revelation, which originates in the goodness of God, and is the best gift of divine mercy to mankind, the design of which is to save men of all nations and ranks, without any distinction of Jew or Gentile, bond or free, from ignorance and superstition, from vice and misery, has risen upon the world like the morning sun, and diffuses its glorious light through all nations.

Instructing us that, denying ungodliness⁸ and worldly desires, we should live soberly and righteously and religiously⁹ in this present world.

12.

⁶ Which bringeth, &c.] "Either hath appeared to all men, as Theophylact; or, with others, that bringeth salvation to all men." Estius apud Bowyer.

⁷ Hath shone forth.] *επεφανη*, "hath shined out or risen like a bright sun, or a cheering constellation, upon a benighted or dark world." Benson: vide also Macknight. "The gospel is called the grace of God, either because it is the greatest favour which God has bestowed on man, or because it teaches the doctrine of God's great favour to men." Macknight. The gospel, that grace of God which containeth the promise of everlasting salvation.

⁸ Ungodliness.] "By ungodliness," says Dr. Benson, "I would understand atheism and irreligion, blasphemy, perjury, profane cursing and swearing, contempt of God, a want of due reverence to him, neglect of his worship, judging hardly or speaking with disrespect of his pro-

Ch. II.
Ver. 12.

The design of the gospel is not to impose rites and ceremonies, to introduce innovations into civil life, and to substitute forms of worship for practical religion, but to reclaim men from impiety and vice, and to make them truly and habitually virtuous. It is intended to teach men to renounce all false conceptions of God, and of the worship and service that he requires, all superstitious notions, all idolatrous rites, and all those vicious affections and criminal practices which the world regards with indifference, and which the prevailing superstitions tolerate and encourage; and it requires that we should live in the conscientious discharge of every religious and moral duty; in the strict government of the appetites and passions; in the exercise of justice, fidelity, and kindness to our fellow-creatures; and in the diligent performance of the duties we owe to the Supreme Being; to fear and love him, and to live under a commanding sense of his presence and inspection in all our transactions with men, in all our intercourse with the world.

13. *Earnestly expecting that blessed hope¹, even the manifestation of the glory of the great God, and of our saviour² Jesus Christ.*

Christianity requires the practice of these duties, and enforces them by

vidence, disobedience to his will. By worldly lusts may be understood the other vices of mankind: every thing contrary to the *sobriety* and *righteousness* recommended in the next verse. All Christians are concerned to avoid these things; but they might be here condemned with a peculiar view to the character of the Cretans."

⁹ *Soberly, &c.*] "*soberly*, i. e. wisely regulating our passions, affections, and appetites: *righteously*, i. e. with justice and equity, kindness, and beneficence towards men; *godlily*, i. e. paying due homage, submission, and obedience to God." Benson.

¹ *Earnestly expecting that blessed hope.*] "gladly entertaining the happy expectation." Wakefield. See Acts xxiv. 15, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

² *Of the great God and of our Saviour.*] "Our Saviour at the last day will appear clothed in his own glory, attended by his Father's glory. Matt. xvi. 27, Mark viii. 38, Luke ix. 26. By the great God, therefore, must be understood the one God and Father of all, who is here and every where else most evidently distinguished from our saviour Jesus Christ. This title is never applied to Jesus Christ in the scriptures, but frequently to the Father, and to him alone." Benson. Beza and others render the words, *our great God and saviour Jesus Christ*; and they say that the appearance of God is a phrase never used in the New Testament. But most certainly Christ is never called *the great God*, nor had the apostle any conception that his words could be so perverted. Macknight well observes, "It is not the appearance of God, but of the glory of the great God here mentioned." Both Newcome and Wakefield render the clause, "the appearance of the great God, and of our saviour Jesus Christ."

"From this expression," says Dr. Priestley, "some have hastily inferred that Jesus Christ and 'the great God' were the same person. But a saying of our Saviour himself will clearly explain this: he says, that he shall return in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels. The appearance of the great God, therefore, signifies nothing more than that glorious presence of God which will accompany Jesus Christ when he shall return to raise the dead and judge the world." "*Dicitur hæc Dei et Christi majestas, quia Deus majestatem illam Christo tribuit. Alii utrumque prædicatum ad idem subjectum, Christum nempe, referunt, contra quam sententiam vide quæ Moldenhawerus recte monuit, in annotationibus ad hunc locum.*" Rosenmuller.

the most powerful sanctions; elevating us to the awful and delightful expectation of a second appearance of our honoured Master Jesus Christ: an appearance, not in the humble form in which he first published his gospel in the world, and died upon the cross. Oh, no! when he shall return again, he will appear in his own glory, and in the glory of his great God and Father, and all his holy angels with him; and being seated on the throne of his glory, the dead, both small and great, shall be judged by him according to their works. Yet, even then, he will maintain the character of the Saviour and the friend of his faithful followers.

Ch. II.
Ver. 13.

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity³, and purify to himself a peculiar people⁴, zealous of good works⁵.

14.

This Saviour was lately upon earth in a very humble form, and after he had fulfilled his ministry in preaching the gospel he suffered death upon the cross, that he might put an end to the Jewish dispensation, and introduce and seal a new, a universal, and perpetual covenant, extending to heathen as well as to Jews; to recover those of us who were under the dominion of ignorance, idolatry, and vice, to truth, piety, and virtue; and the great design of all was to set apart for himself a people distinguished from all the rest of mankind by their zeal, not for speculative opinions, not for useless and burdensome rites, but for the practice of substantial and universal virtue. This, under the Christian dispensation, is the main distinction between those who are the true and approved servants of God, and the unbelieving, idolatrous, and wicked world.

3. The apostle enjoins it upon Titus to insist strongly upon these topics, ver. 15.

³ *Redeem us from all iniquity:] i. e. to recover us from a Gentile state.* "Here," says Dr. Priestley, "we see the true meaning of Christian redemption. It is a deliverance from iniquity, and all the effects of it, by making us virtuous and good, and by no means a deliverance from the wrath of God by the death of Christ. The phrase 'peculiar people' is borrowed from the Old Testament, where the Jewish nation is said to be a peculiar people, that is, distinguished from all other nations for great and valuable purposes. In like manner, in the Christian dispensation, all good men may be considered as the peculiar people of Christ, without any distinction of nations."

⁴ *A peculiar people.] περιεσταν.* Compare Ex. xix. 5, Deut. vii. 6. The Jews were formerly the peculiar people of God. Now, believing Gentiles are taken into that honourable relation. "*Populus eximius, præstans: a περιεμμι, superior sum, antecello.*" Rosenmüller.

⁵ *Zealous of good works.]* "When our Lord and his apostles have laid such stress upon good works, and have frequently declared them absolutely necessary to salvation, none who profess Christianity ought to neglect the practice of them, much less speak of them with aversion and contempt." Benson.

Ch. II.
Ver. 15.

*These things*¹ *speak and exhort, and reprove with all authority. Let no man despise thee*².

Let these important topics which I have now suggested, viz. the great design and the awful expectations of the gospel, be the constant theme of your discourse both in public and in private. Upon these principles ground all your exhortations to the different classes of mankind, to perform the duties which the gospel requires; for if this will not influence men to repent of their crimes, and to live in the practice of virtue, nothing will. If any object to your doctrine, and are desirous of substituting the observation of ceremonies for the performance of duty, confute and expose their pernicious errors: and if any act upon these dangerous principles, reprove them with prudence, with fidelity, and with authority, mindful of the commission under which you act, and knowing the powers with which you are invested, and the purposes for which they were given; do not tamely submit to insults, which would lessen your character and impede your usefulness.

SECTION V.

Ch. III. *THE APOSTLE exhorts Titus to press upon his hearers the due performance of their civil and social duties, which he enforces by considerations peculiar to the Christian religion. Ch. iii. 1—7.*

1. The apostle exhorts Titus to remind his hearers of their duties to magistrates and civil authorities, and to recommend a quiet, peaceable spirit, ver. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. *Admonish them to be submissive to authorities and powers, to be ready to obey them in every good work*³.

¹ *These things.*] Dr. Benson observes, that "by instruction and authority from the apostles Evangelists might teach, preach, reprove, rebuke, exhort; but they are never said to have testified the grand fact of Christ's resurrection."

² *Let no man despise thee.*] Compare Tim. iv. 12. The apostle does not say to Titus, Let no man despise thy youth: a proof that Titus was older than Timothy. See Benson and Priestley.

³ *To obey them in every good work.*] *πειθαρχειν προς παν.* So Wakefield. "Put them in mind of a ready obedience to these in every good work." By others the clauses are kept distinct: "Put men in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." Newcome.

Remind the converts in Crete that they are not, by their profession of the Christian religion, absolved from their obligation to obey their civil rulers, as the Jewish zealots often teach their misguided proselytes. Christianity is no enemy to social order: let believers know, therefore, that their religion requires them to yield subjection to the civil authorities, in what hands soever they may be lodged, and in whatever manner they may be exercised, even though the magistrate should be a heathen, and his government oppressive and unjust. As the Christian religion is far from abridging men's civil rights, so neither does it confer any civil privilege. And as the Christian converts must submit to their civil governors, whatever their character may be, so they must be active, ready, and cheerful in their obedience, when they are required to do any thing which may contribute to the peace and prosperity of the community; and at all times they must be attentive to their social duties.

To calumniate no man, to avoid contention, to be gentle, showing all meekness to all men.

2.

The disciples of Christ, whose doctrine is a law of kindness, are strictly prohibited from using harsh and opprobrious language. They must not needlessly speak evil of others, even when it may be done with truth; much less may they calumniate and blast the reputation of their neighbours by false and malicious misrepresentations of their language, character, or conduct. Quarrelling and fighting are utterly inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity, which strongly inculcates gentleness, forbearance, and a meek and forgiving spirit to all men of all countries, parties, and sects, whatever injuries they may commit, or whatever provocations they may offer.

2. The mercy of God in the gospel dispensation purifies the heart from the unsocial and malignant passions which were indulged in an unconverted state, and infuses a spirit of universal goodness, ver. 3—7.

For we also⁴ were formerly without understanding, disobedient, erring, enslaved to various appetites and pleasures⁵, living in malice and envy, odious, and hating one another⁶.

3.

⁴ *For we also.*] Benson and Priestley think the apostle only is intended, Newcome only Gentiles, Macknight only Jews. Probably both Jews and Gentiles are to be included: *q. d.* We may well be disposed to exercise meekness and gentleness to others, having ourselves needed it so much while we remained in an unconverted state.

⁵ *Appetites and pleasures.*] ἐπιθυμιαὶ καὶ ἡδοναίς. Dr. Benson observes, that “these words do not always express impure desire and voluptuousness (vide Steph. *Thesaur.*), but merely

Ch. III.
Ver. 3.

For we who are now converted to the Christian religion, and whose lives are regulated by the precepts and by the spirit of Christianity, were in our unconverted state as immoral and as profligate as the unchristianized world still is. We were once destitute of all just sentiments of religion, disobedient to the laws of God and man, wandering in the paths of error and vice, the wretched slaves of appetite and passion, intemperate, malignant, envious, odious, and delighting to injure each other. Such was once our disgrace and misery.

4. *But when the kindness of God our saviour, and his love toward man*
5. *shone forth, he saved¹ us, not by works of justification² which we did, but according to his mercy, by the laver of regeneration³, and by the reno-*

intense inclination, Mark iv. 19, 1 Thess. ii. 17 ; and pleasure, which is not inconsistent with Saul's character before his conversion." He remarks, that "the apostle does not mention idolatry, adultery, theft, &c., which were the gross vices of idolatrous Gentiles."

⁶ *One another.*] The Æthiopic reads ἀδελφῆς, *the brethren*; which, if admitted, would be peculiarly applicable to Paul. See Benson. Dr. Benson's principal reason for limiting this description to the apostle himself seems to be, that the abundant effusion of the holy spirit, noted ver. 6, was only applicable to himself as an apostle. But it seems not unlikely that the apostle might use this expression to denote the abundance of spiritual gifts communicated to the primitive believers; and that he might mean to include believers in general, without excepting those whose conduct antecedent to their conversion had, like his own, been least stained with the grosser vices.

¹ *Saved.*] "delivered us from the miserable and wicked state in which we were living before we believed the gospel." Macknight. See Newcome and Benson. "shone forth." Macknight. See ch. ii. 11.

² *By works of justification.*] "justifying works; works tending to gain us admission into the gospel covenant." Newcome.

³ *The laver of regeneration.*] λῆτρον *proprie* balneum, *per metonymiam subjecti* lavacrum, *ipsa aqua in balneo.* Schleusner. When a Jew or a heathen was converted to the Christian religion, the change which took place in his apprehensions, in his affections, in his character, and his expectations, was so great and extraordinary, that it seemed as though he had become an inhabitant of a new world; and this change is sometimes compared to a resurrection from the dead (see Rom. vi.); and sometimes, as in the text, to a new birth. Compare John iii. 3—7, 1 Pet. i. 3, 23. They who are introduced into this state are said to be *saved*, i. e. rescued from the bondage of idolatry, or from the yoke of the law (see ver. 5); and this *not by works of righteousness which they had done*, but by the *free mercy of God*, who had invited them into the gospel covenant, without any antecedent claim of merit in them, entirely of his own gratuitous goodness. And as baptism was the appointed symbol by which the believer was to express his conversion to the Christian faith, his transition from the unbelieving world into the holy community, this rite is sometimes spoken of as if it were the actual change, of which it was the authorized symbol. So Acts xxii. 16, Ananias says to Paul, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." See also John iii. 5, 1 Pet. iii. 21. And in the text we are said to be saved by the *washing* or the *laver of regeneration*, in connexion with the renovation of the holy spirit. Hence it was, that the word παλιγγενεσία, *regeneration*, was used by the early ecclesiastical writers for baptism, which was the emblem of the change produced. And a baptized person was said to be *regenerated*: referring solely to his *external* and *professed*, not to his *moral* state. Vide Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clem. Alex. and Theophilus, as referred to by Whitby *in loc.* But this use of the symbol for the thing signified, gradually introduced that enormous error which prevails in the Roman, and in some Protestant churches, that *Baptism is Christian regeneration*: so that a child born in original sin, and therefore liable

vation of the holy spirit⁴, which he shed on us richly through Jesus Christ our saviour. Ch. III.
Ver. 6.

Such was the unhappy condition both of Jews and Gentiles, when the joyful tidings of the gospel were proclaimed to the world; but when this best gift of God to man, this strongest proof of divine benignity and goodwill, enlightened the benighted world with its beautiful ray, God our creator and deliverer saved us thereby from the darkness, the errors, the vices, and the misery of our former state. And this he did, not because we, in consequence of our wise improvement of past privileges, had entitled ourselves to still superior advantages. Far from it: on the contrary, our apostasy and vices had incurred a just sentence of condemnation; and our present improved and happy state is entirely owing to the free unmerited mercy of God, whose goodness prompted him to interpose for our relief; and by whose blessing upon the means of instruction, we have been induced to enter ourselves as members of the Christian community, by the solemn rite of baptism; and have, as it were, been introduced into a new world, in which our views, our feelings, our expectations, and our conduct, as well as our privileges and obligations, are totally changed from what they formerly were. To which happy renovation, the abundant effusion of the holy spirit from Jesus Christ, who has been appointed by God to be the deliverer of mankind, has in no small degree contributed, having supplied us with the most convincing evidence of the truth of the Christian doctrine, and thereby excited the most glorious and interesting expectations.

That, being justified through his favour, we might become heirs, as to the hope⁵, of eternal life. 7.

He gave us the gospel freely, and poured out his spirit upon us abundantly, that we might be convinced of the truth of the evangelical doctrine; and that, by our cordial acceptance, and our public profession of the Chris-

to eternal misery, is sanctified and saved by being washed by a duly authorized priest: and even the greatest sinner, by being baptized, receives immediate and unqualified forgiveness. Who that looks into the New Testament could ever have thought it possible that such monstrous absurdities could have been fastened upon it? and who would suspect that such absurdities could have found advocates among men of learning in the present enlightened and inquisitive age?

⁴ *Renovation of the holy spirit*] “that renovation of mind which the holy spirit usually communicated to converts in those ages had the strongest tendency to produce.” Newcome.

⁵ *As to the hope.*] κατ’ ἐλπίδα. “Include this between commas, to connect κληρονόμοι with ζωῆς, which would otherwise want a genitive. Piscator, Knatchbull, Grotius. The words seem to disturb the sense, and may therefore be omitted. They are wanting in one manuscript. Dr. Owen.” Bowyer.

Ch. III. tian religion, we might be advanced to the character and privilege of sons,
Ver. 7. and might become expectants of the inheritance of everlasting life; a glorious and awful expectation, which, to every virtuous believer, shall in due time be fulfilled to its utmost extent; and which in the mean time may justly animate them to the discharge of every duty, and console them under every loss and every suffering.

SECTION VI.

THE APOSTLE directs the evangelist to recommend honourable industry, to avoid useless disputations, to dismiss contentious and factious persons from the society; and concludes the epistle with some particular charges, with salutations, and the apostolical benediction. Ch. iii. 8—15.

1. The apostle desires that Titus would insist strongly upon honourable industry, ver. 8.

8. *This doctrine¹ is worthy of credit. And these things² I will, that thou strongly affirm; so that they who have believed in God may be careful to excel in reputable occupations³. These are honourable and useful to mankind.*

The doctrine which I have advanced concerning the great goodness of God in our salvation by Jesus Christ, and in raising us to the hope of life by the gift of his spirit, is a truth of the greatest moment, and the belief of it is of the highest practical importance. And with regard to the con-

¹ *This doctrine:] i. e.* “the doctrine he had laid down in the four preceding verses.” Newcome.

² *These things.] τῶν.* “these heirs of the hope of life, the converts from idolatry in Crete.” Macknight. “these things.” Newcome, Wakefield.

³ *Excel in reputable occupations.] καλῶν ἔργων προΐσθαι i. e.* good works in general. Macknight, &c.; but the same expression occurs again ver. 14, where, from the connexion, Macknight allows it signifies honest occupations and trades: it seems probable, therefore, that this is the meaning here. *προΐσθαι*, “bona opera tueri, juvare.” Newcome, Kypke, Ellys. “that those who trust in God may study to be foremost in good works.” Wakefield.—“be careful to stand up for good works.” Benson. Grotius’s observations are excellent: “*Præesse bonis operibus non est aliud quam domum suam facere honesti alicujus opificii officinam, omnes suos exercere in laboribus honestis, non agere vitam lenonum, parasitorum, scenicorum, aruspicum, aut his similem. Hunc sensum nobis monstrat eadem sententia repetita infra 14. Op-ponuntur hæc ei quod modo de Cretensibus dixerat γαστρες ἀργαί.*”

verted Gentiles, who are thus unexpectedly become heirs of the hope of immortal life, I strictly charge you to inculcate upon them the practice of virtue, as a necessary means of obtaining it; and as the Cretans are as notorious for their indolence as for their intemperance, and as there are some persons who are disposed to teach, or to believe, that a life of indolence, and wasting time in angry disputes upon frivolous questions, is acceptable to God, I charge you, Titus, on the contrary to insist steadily upon this point, that all who have embraced and still continue in the Christian faith, who, having been converted from idolatry, have become the worshipers of the one true God, shall pursue some honest and reputable occupation, by which they may be able to maintain themselves and their families without being a burden upon the community. It is by honourable industry in the proper business of life that the disciples of Christ will do the most credit to their profession; for it is by these means that they will make themselves most useful to mankind, both by their good example and their beneficent actions.

Ch. III.
Ver. 8.

2. The apostle dissuades Titus from useless controversy, ver. 9.

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies⁴, and disputes, and contentions about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain. 9.

Time is too precious to be wasted upon trifling disputes, either in settling intricate genealogies, or in quarrelling about distinctions of food, distinctions of days, or other subjects which the zealots of the law of Moses, burdened with the additional encumbrances of Pharisaic tradition, are so eager to introduce, which they so rigorously impose, and for which they so intemperately contend.

3. The apostle advises Titus to dismiss from the Christian society men of a contentious and factious spirit, ver. 10—11.

Reject a man who is a fomenter of divisions⁵ after the first and second 10.

⁴ *Genealogies.*] Bengelius and others suppose the Gnostic doctrine of the Æons to be referred to here; but being mentioned in connexion with disputes about the law, it seems probable that Jewish genealogies are particularly alluded to.

⁵ *A fomenter of divisions.*] αἰρετικὸν ἀνθρώπον, a heretic: i. e. "a man who teaches what he knows to be erroneous." Whitby, Macknight, Newcome. "a man who errs in fundamental doctrine; and self-condemned, because he publicly avows that which furnishes matter for his condemnation." Doddridge. "a man who foment divisions, or sects, or parties." Wakefield. "The word αἵρεσις, heresy, does not with the ancients," says Dr. Benson, "signify doctrine, but a sect or party. It is usually rendered sect in our common translation. In 1 Cor. xi. 19 it is

Ch. III. admonition¹, knowing that such an one is wholly perverted², and erreth³,
Ver. 11. being self-condemned⁴.

If any men of a contentious overbearing disposition, and particularly, any of the warm zealots for the law, should, notwithstanding your efforts to maintain the peace, the order, and the liberty of the Gentile church, and to banish these frivolous and vexatious questions, persist in propagating their obnoxious tenets, and should disturb the peace of the society by forming parties in opposition to the doctrine that we are authorized to teach, it is my advice to you, once or twice, to warn such sectaries in a calm and serious manner of their guilt and their danger, and to expostulate with them concerning the impropriety of their conduct in destroying the harmony of the society, by dividing it upon questions of so little importance: and if they refuse to listen to your advice, and to alter their conduct, discard them from the church,

rendered *heresies*, but in the margin *sects*: as it is most reasonable to understand it Gal. v. 20, 2 Pet. ii. 2, where it is translated *heresies*. *Schism* is a rent, a groundless faction or division among members of the same congregation; *heresy* has its foundation in schism. A heresy is a sect, faction, or party; or, the persons of which that party consists. Vide 1 Cor. xi. 18, 19: 'I hear there be divisions (marg. *schisms*) among you; and I partly believe it, for there must be also heresies (marg. *sects*) among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest.'

"A heretic, then, (*αἵρετικὸς*) is a sect-maker, or sectary: one who makes or follows a sect or party. Among the philosophers the word was of a middle signification. Acts xxvi. 5 heresy is used in a good sense; but when it is condemned as one of the works of the flesh, it is used in a bad sense.

"Those who to the best of their judgement take Christ for their head and guide in religious matters, though such men may perhaps mistake the meaning of several texts, or judge wrong as to points of doctrine, and though others may perhaps exclude them from their communion, yet they constitute a true church of Christ, though few in number; and those who oppose them and renounce communion with them are the heretics, how numerous soever they may be, and how great soever their worldly power."

Such are the judicious observations of Dr. Benson in his excellent note upon this text.—Archbishop Newcome refers to Bishop Pearce's Sermon upon the subject, as above all worthy of being consulted.

¹ *Reject after admonition.*] "It is not said, Imprison him, tease him with artful examinations, or put him to the torture to make him confess; and then, if he will not recant, roast him by a slow and lingering fire. Such rules never proceeded from the apostles of our Lord, but from the ministers of Satan. Exciting the rage of the populace, or, awakening the zeal of the magistrate, inflicting pains and penalties, &c., has never yet been found the way to enlighten men's understandings, or to make them better Christians or honest men. Titus was not rashly to reject a heretic: if upon repeated admonition he repented, he was not to reject him at all; but if he did not thereupon amend, he was to be rejected as incorrigible, and as no longer under the evangelist's care and inspection." Benson. "Reject, avoid, withdraw thyself from." Newcome.

² *Is wholly perverted.*] *εξερραπται*. The word is applied to *buildings*; and signifies, to be overturned from the foundation. Estius, Macknight.

³ *Erreth.*] *ἀμαρτανῶ*, "*aberrō a scopo proposito*:" to err from the mark, to wander from the road; to sin. Schleusner.

⁴ *Being self-condemned.*] "He that thus breaks off from the unity of the church, doth in effect inflict that punishment upon himself which the church useth to malefactors; that is, cutting himself off from the church." Hammond.

and regard them no longer as members of the Christian community: for it is plain that people who are so zealous for Jewish rites are utter strangers to the doctrine and spirit of Christianity. If they were ever acquainted with it, they are now entirely alienated from it; and by setting themselves up at the head of factions and parties in opposition to us, they do in effect renounce communion with us, and pass a sentence of excommunication upon themselves.

Ch. III.
Ver. 11.

4. He directs Titus to come to him at Nicopolis, and to give every necessary assistance to Zenas and Apollos, ver. 12, 13.

When I shall send to thee Artemas or Tychicus, endeavour to come to me to Nicopolis⁵, for I have determined to pass the winter there. 12.

I propose to stay a few months longer at Ephesus, and at the latter end of the year I intend to go to Nicopolis in Thrace, where I mean to pass the winter. Before that time I shall send either Artemas or Tychicus to relieve you from the duties of your laborious office, after which I hope you will come to me at Nicopolis and spend the winter with me.

Diligently help forward on their way Zenas, the teacher of the law, and Apollos, that they may want nothing. 13.

Two of our friends, Zenas, who before his conversion to Christianity was an eminent teacher of the Jewish law, and Apollos, so well known in the churches as an eloquent preacher of the gospel, are now upon a journey, intending to promote the knowledge of the Christian religion in the countries which they visit. In their way they mean to pass through Crete. When you see them, give them every assistance to render their visit pleasant and useful while they remain with you, and to help them forward in their jour-

⁵ *Nicopolis.*] If the hypothesis be admitted that the Epistle to Titus was written from Ephesus in the beginning of A.D. 56, the apostle must have changed his plan of passing the winter at Nicopolis. After having received the Epistle from the Corinthians and returned his answer, he determined to postpone his visit to Corinth till he had learned how his Letter had been received, and the effect which it had produced. For this purpose, having sent Artemas to Crete to relieve Titus, he directed that evangelist to go directly to Corinth, and having seen how matters stood there, to make a report to him at Troas: intending at that time to stay at Ephesus till Pentecost. But being obliged to depart sooner than he intended in consequence of the tumult occasioned by Demetrius and the artists, he did not find Titus at Troas, and being impatient to receive tidings from him, he crossed over to Macedonia, where he met him. Titus, therefore, must have left Crete immediately upon Artemas's arrival; and meeting Paul in Macedonia, probably accompanied him to Illyricum, and passed the winter of the year 56 with the apostle there.

Ch. III. ney, and assist them in the purposes of their mission, when they depart from
Ver. 13. Crete.

5. The apostle again recommends honourable industry, and, after a general salutation, he concludes the epistle with the apostolical benediction, ver. 14, 15.

14. *And let our converts also learn to excel in reputable occupations¹ for necessary exigencies, that they be not unfruitful.*

Having mentioned the assistance which I wish you to afford to Zenas and Apollos, it reminds me once more to request that you will urge the converts from heathenism to the Christian faith to distinguish themselves from their indolent and intemperate neighbours by industry in their proper callings, that so they may have something in store to lay out for useful purposes, and particularly to promote the knowledge and the practice of the Christian religion among those who have not yet been blessed with the light of truth; and to assist in bearing the expenses of missionaries who, like these two eminent teachers of the gospel, are willing to devote themselves to this laborious and hazardous office. Thus they will prove to the world that the faith which they profess is an operative and useful principle, when they see its beneficial effects, in producing industry, sobriety, economy, and liberality, among those who were formerly idle, intemperate, sordid, and selfish.

15. *All who are with me salute thee. Salute those who love us in the faith. The favour of God be with you all.*

The Christians at Ephesus send their affectionate salutations to you. Salute in my name all those who are our friends in the true and uncorrupted faith. With regard to those who debase the Christian doctrine by

¹ *Reputable occupations, &c.*] vid. ver. 8. “for necessary uses, in respect to the wants of their fellow-Christians. As concerning liberality and hospitality to them; especially to propagators of the gospel.” Newcome.

“The apostle,” says Dr. Priestley, “now concludes his epistle with giving directions about particular things. These little circumstances, though of no use to us in any other view, are of the greatest use in proving the genuineness of the epistles. They are so written, as that no man can seriously believe them to be forgeries: accordingly, it never was doubted either that they were Paul’s, or that they were written in the circumstances to which he alludes. The proof of the truth of the gospel history from this one circumstance is of a peculiarly clear and satisfactory kind to those who properly attend to it; but few appear to me to have done this. It would be quite as easy to account for the writing of the Epistles of Cicero, upon the supposition of there being no truth in the Roman history, as to account for the writing of these of Paul, on the idea of there being no truth in the Christian history: so exactly do they correspond to one another.”

mixtures of Jewish ceremonies, I know that they are no friends of mine, and that they are fully aware that my unwearied efforts are continually exerted to oppose their pernicious errors. To send Christian salutations to such would be hypocrisy in me, and by them would be regarded as an insult. To conclude: As I have written this Epistle, not merely for the instruction of you, my convert to the faith, my companion in labour and in danger, and my representative in Crete, but for the benefit of the whole community of Christians in that extensive island, my apostolical benediction rest upon you all! May the favour of Almighty God be with you! Possessed of this, you will be safe and happy.

Ch. III.
Ver. 15.

THE EPISTLE

TO

THE HEBREWS.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THE antiquity of the EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS has never been disputed. It was written in the apostolic age, and anterior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; for it contains many expressions which plainly imply that the Temple service was then existing. And as the epistle was certainly written by a Hebrew Christian and addressed to believing Hebrews, if that dreadful catastrophe had actually taken place, it is morally impossible that there should not have been some direct mention of it, or some plain allusion to it.

The author of this epistle is uncertain. It is commonly ascribed to the apostle Paul: but the ancients were divided in their opinion concerning it¹;

¹ "This epistle," says Dr. Lardner, "was generally received in ancient times by those Christians who used the Greek language and lived in the Eastern part of the Roman empire. Clement of Alexandria before the end of the second century received the epistle as Paul's, and quotes it without hesitation. It is not, however, expressly quoted as Paul's by any Latin writer in the first three centuries." Lardner's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 395, Dr. Kippis's edition.

Some writers, both ancient and modern, have supposed that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written in Hebrew or Syriac, and translated into Greek. This hypothesis was defended by J. D. Michaelis, but refuted (says Rosenmüller) by Semler, who proved that the apostle wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews in Greek, in a *Dissertation* published at Halle, 1761. It seems, however, strange, that an epistle to the Hebrews should have been written in Greek: a language which it is probable that most of those who lived in Palestine did not understand. Some, therefore, have thought that the epistle was not addressed to them, but to the Hebrew

some giving it to Paul, others to Barnabas, or Clement, or Luke. It was a prevalent opinion among the ancients, and has been adopted by some modern critics, that the apostle dictated the epistle in Hebrew, or Syro-Chaldaic, and that it was translated into Greek by Luke or Clement, or rather that the ideas and arguments are Paul's, but that the style and language are Luke's.

That the language of the epistle is not that of the apostle Paul, is very generally allowed; and the reasons for this opinion are assigned by Origen, who was a competent judge of style and composition, being himself a good writer in Greek. "The style of the Epistle to the Hebrews," says that learned Father, "hath not the apostle's rudeness of speech; but as to the texture of it, it is very elegant Greek, as every one will allow who is able to judge of differences of style. If I were to speak my opinion, I should say that the sentiments are the apostle's; but the language and composition another's, who committed to writing the apostle's sense, and, as it were, reduced into commentaries the things spoken by his master; so that if any church receive this epistle for Paul's, it is to be commended; for the ancients ascribed it to Paul; but no person certainly knows the composer but God. But the report transmitted to us by some is, that Clemens, who was bishop of Rome, wrote the epistle, and by others that it was written by Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts'."

That the apostle Paul was not the author of this epistle is, I think, suffi-

Christians dispersed through the Roman empire. Lardner agrees with those who think the epistle was originally written in Greek, and argues against Spanheim and Wetstein from the occurrence of Greek paronomasias, or the concurrence of words of similar sound: a proof which he thinks unanswerable. The quotations from the Old Testament being all made from the LXX., and that even where it materially differs from the Hebrew, is likewise a strong presumption that the Epistle was written in Greek.

¹ See Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* lib. vi. cap. 25. Dr. Lardner's opinion is, that Paul dictated the epistle in Hebrew; and another, who was a great master of the Greek language, immediately wrote down the apostle's sentiments in his own elegant Greek. But who this assistant of the apostle was, is altogether unknown. "This is an admirable epistle," continues this learned writer, "but singular in sentiments and language: somewhat different in both these respects from all the other writings in the New Testament. And whose is the language, as seems to me, is altogether unknown, whether that of Zenas or Apollos, or some other of the apostle's assistants or fellow-labourers." Lardner's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 410.

Eusebius says: "Paul having written to the Hebrews in their own language, some think that the evangelist Luke, and others that Clement, translated it into Greek." *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. 38.

Philaster, bishop of Brescia about 380, says: "There are some who do not allow the Epistle to the Hebrews to have been written by Paul, but say it is either an epistle of the apostle Barnabas, or of Clement bishop of Rome: but some say it is an epistle of Luke the evangelist. Moreover some reject it, as being more eloquent than the apostle's other writings."

Jerome, about 392, says: "The epistle called to the Hebrews is not thought to be Paul's

ciently evident: and though I was once inclined to the opinion of those who think that the ideas are Paul's, but the dress and language Luke's, upon further consideration I incline to believe that the apostle had no concern either in the matter or the form of this epistle: for though he frequently borrows the language of the scriptures to express his own ideas, and occasionally, perhaps, indulges in that loose and figurative interpretation of the Old Testament which was the fashion of the age, he never carries his allegorical reasoning to that great, and I had almost said extravagant extent, in which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews indulges himself.

Still, however, it cannot be denied that the epistle was written in the apostolic age, and probably by some apostolic man; some associate of the apostles: not Luke, who was probably a Greek; whose compositions are chaste and elegant, and whose taste and judgement could never stoop to the verbal and declamatory mode of reasoning adopted by this author; which, however, might not offend Barnabas or Apollōs, who were Jews by birth. The fashion of allegorizing the Old Testament might not be displeasing to those who were accustomed to Jewish habits of thinking and reasoning, and who were not proficient in the dialectic art. It is, however, quite impossible that such writing and reasoning should have any claim to inspiration. Nevertheless, whatever may be thought of the *arguments* upon which the writer builds his conclusions, the *conclusions* themselves are undoubtedly true. The reasonings are adapted to the principles and the prejudices of the simple and uninformed Hebrew believer; but the doctrine is plainly that of the apostles², such as the author had derived from the purest sources,

because of the difference of argument and style; but either Barnabas's, as Tertullian thought, or the evangelist Luke's, according to some others, or Clement's, bishop of Rome, who, as some think, being much with him, clothed and adorned St. Paul's sense in his own language. Moreover he wrote as a Hebrew to Hebrews, in pure Hebrew, it being his own language; whence it came to pass, that being translated it has more elegance in the Greek than his other epistles." See Lardner, vol. vi. pp. 408, 409.

"*Cujus scriptoris sit hæc Epistola non mirum est hodie dubitari, cum etiam veteres dubitaverint.*" Grotius; who thinks it impossible that Paul should be the author: "*ideo quod Paulinæ epistolæ inter se sint germanæ, pari caractere et dicendi modo: hæc vero manifeste ab iis discrepet, selectiores habens voces Græcas, leniusque fluens, non autem fracta brevibus incisis, ac salebrosa.*" He concludes that the epistle was written by Luke. The truth is, as Origen states it, that God only knows the author; and it is in vain to bewilder ourselves in conjecture. It is not, however, improbable that it was written by a hearer or an associate of Paul; which may account for his arguing in some instances from the same premises as the apostle. Comp. Heb. ii. 8 with 1 Cor. xv. 27.

² "*Distinguenda sunt argumenta quibus auctor hujus epistolæ utitur ab ipsis veritatibus, quas proponit. Bene Clericus ad Hammond, ad Heb. ix. 16. de auctore hujus epistolæ, 'Capita omnia doctrinæ Christianæ, quæ persequitur, verissima sunt, et possunt ex reliqua scriptura probari: sed ratio, qua illa illustrat, plane est similis consuetudini illorum temporum, ut ex Philone intel-*

uncorrupted with the base alloy either of Pharisaic tradition or of heathen philosophy.

There is a very considerable resemblance between the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that which is extant under the name of Barnabas. In both, the doctrinal part consists of strained allegorical interpretations of the Old Testament scriptures. The latter, however, carries his figurative interpretations to a still more extravagant extreme than the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and takes to himself no small degree of credit for his own ingenuity¹. Nevertheless, in both these Epistles the practical part is excellent. In that of Barnabas, the moral instruction, which is found only in the Greek original, and not in the Latin version, is in no respect unworthy of the very chief of the apostles. Some learned men, among whom is Jeremiah Jones, think that the Epistle of Barnabas is a forgery of the second century: but the prevailing opinion is, that it is the production of some Hebrew Christian of the apostolic age, and that, if it were originally written by Barnabas, it has been tampered with by some early scribe. At any rate, it exhibits a specimen of the manner in which the scriptures were then interpreted.

There is, however, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, besides a great superiority in style, an ingenuity and coherence not to be found in the Epistle of Barnabas. The design of the author is to reconcile the minds of the Hebrew Christians to the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, and to warn those wavering believers of the danger of apostasy. And he conducts his argument with a considerable degree of ingenuity, and in a way which was most

ligere licet, in quo sunt passim ejusmodi accommodationes locorum SS. ratiocinationesque inde deductæ, in quibus nulla grammaticæ ratio habetur, nec aliud spectatur, nisi ut res ipsa quæ iis illustratur, sit vera. Is mos erat illius ætatis, quem non magis mirari debemus, quam nostras ipsorum consuetudines hodiernas." Rosenmüller.

¹ This writer explains the law concerning the distinction of animals into clean and unclean, as intended to recommend moral purity, which he illustrates by some fanciful instances. Of one animal he says that it changes its sex every year; and of another, that it brings forth its young at its mouth. And he accounts for his own superior knowledge upon these subjects by special divine communications. See Barnab. *Epist.* part i. c. 10. The difference is so great between the nonsense of the doctrinal, and the wisdom of the practical part of this short epistle, that one might be tempted to believe that they were written by different authors. There is nothing in the Epistle to the Hebrews so absurd as these examples from that of Barnabas, though some of the analogies are equally far-fetched and irrelevant: particularly those which relate to Melchizedec, ch. vii. Dr. Lardner says, that "Barnabas often argues like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but without borrowing from him." *Works*, vol. ii. p. 20. It is not denied that the Epistle of Barnabas, with many fanciful analogies, contains many excellent things; Dr. Lardner, p. 12, justly observes, that "the first part is an exhortation to constancy in the belief and profession of the Christian doctrine, without the rites of the Jewish law. The second part contains moral instruction."

likely to make a favourable impression upon the feelings of the Jewish believers. He begins with expatiating upon the superior dignity of the messenger of the new covenant above all former prophets and messengers of God: and it is not till after he has stated that the person commissioned upon this important errand could not with propriety be an angel from heaven, or a being of any order superior to mankind, that he ventures to introduce the name of Jesus, as a person who, having by the gracious appointment of God tasted of death for the benefit of all, was for that reason already crowned with glory and honour, and ordained to universal dominion. And having shown how expedient, and even necessary, it was that the great deliverer of mankind should himself be a suffering human being, he proceeds to reconcile the believing Hebrews to this state of things, by running a parallel between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations, and by illustrating the great superiority of the latter, even in those articles in which the Jews were accustomed principally to glory² as the peculiar excellencies of their own institution. He particularly argues that the new dispensation possesses a superior lawgiver, a superior promise, a superior chieftain, and above all a superior priesthood, a superior temple service, a superior victim, and a superior mode of consecration and sacrifice: and, from the whole, he infers the extreme danger of apostasy, against which he frequently and solemnly warns them in the most earnest and affectionate language.

This epistle is divided into two Parts—DOCTRINAL and PRACTICAL. The former extends to the eighteenth verse of the tenth chapter, and the latter to the end of the epistle.

PART THE FIRST.

The writer endeavours to reconcile the Hebrews to the offensive DOCTRINES of the Christian dispensation, by showing its superiority in every important particular to the institutions of Moses; and to illustrate his argument,

² Rosenmuller, after stating the objection which the unbelieving Jews urged against the Christian revelation as every way inferior to that of Moses, adds, "*Contra hos igitur Paulus ostendit Jesum Nazarenum longe superiorem esse angelis, Mose, Pontifice Maximo V. T., omnibusque reliquis sacerdotibus; ex ejus morte et cruciatibus pro nobis perpessis, multo majora, et diuturniora bona ad nos redundare, quam ad Judæos ex cultu Levitico, &c. Ex his aliisque argumentis probat, Christianam religionem esse multo præstantiorem, perfectioremque illa vetere Judaica, et adhortatur Christianos ad constantiam in religione, et omnium virtutum indefessum studium. In toto hoc argumento tractando auctor se accommodat ingenio eorum, qui a Judaica ad Christianam religionem transierant, eosque a primis elementis religionis ad altiora ducit.*"

FIRST, The author asserts the pre-eminence of the founder of the new dispensation over all former prophets and messengers of God, and infers the superior regard which is due to the dispensation introduced by him. Ch. i. 1—ii. 4.

SECONDLY. He argues that the nature of this dispensation required that the first teacher of it should not be an angel or a celestial spirit, but a suffering human being, of the same nature with those whom he came to redeem from death. Ch. ii. 5—18.

THIRDLY. The author briefly argues the superiority of Jesus to Moses. Ch. iii. 1—6.

FOURTHLY. The *rest* promised to believers, and into which Jesus conducts his followers, being superior to that into which Joshua led the Israelites, the neglect of the proper means of securing it must be proportionably criminal and dangerous. Ch. iii. 7—iv. 13.

FIFTHLY. He expatiates upon the priesthood of Jesus, and in particular he argues at large the superiority of the priesthood of Christ, which is after the order of Melchisedec, to the Levitical priesthood, which was after the order of Aaron; and from these premises he infers the temporary duration and speedy abolition of the ceremonial law and the Mosaic institute. Ch. iv. 14—vii.

SIXTHLY. The author then proceeds to his main point of reconciling the minds of the believing Hebrews to the very offensive doctrine of a crucified Messiah, by representing the death of Christ as that of a victim of a superior nature, whose blood was shed to ratify a covenant far superior to that of Moses, of which sacrifice those of the Levitical institute were nothing more than types and shadows. Ch. viii. 1—x. 18.

With this important argument, which he labours with great industry and ingenuity, and which he sets in a variety of lights, he concludes the Doctrinal Part of the epistle.

PART THE SECOND.

The Second Part of the epistle contains the PRACTICAL APPLICATION of the doctrine which the author had advanced.

FIRST. He urges the believing Hebrews to patience and to perseverance, and again warns them of the extreme danger of apostasy. Ch. x. 19, &c.

SECONDLY. He defines the nature of faith, and exemplifies the excellence

of this valuable principle in the conduct of the Jewish worthies, whose history is recorded in the Old Testament. Ch. xi.

THIRDLY. From these examples, from the character of Christ, and his fortitude under sufferings, and from the pre-eminent glory of the gospel dispensation, he urges the believing Hebrews to endure persecution with courage, and to adhere faithfully to their profession. Ch. xii.

FOURTHLY. He exhorts them to the practice of various virtues, and to yield a respectful submission to their Christian and apostolic instructors. Ch. xiii. 1—17.

FIFTHLY. He concludes the epistle with earnestly recommending himself to their prayers, with devout wishes for their improvement, with apologizing for the freedom which he had used, and with the usual benediction, ver. 18, &c.

In the Exposition of this celebrated epistle I have adopted that interpretation which, to the best of my judgement, after the most serious examination, expresses the true meaning of the writer. This in some instances differs considerably from the usual and popular mode of explaining the text: but I hope that it is supported by evidence sufficient to convince the candid, the serious, and the inquisitive; for such only are open to conviction. All, therefore, that I request of the reader is, that he would read with candour, and judge with impartiality: and may the Spirit of Truth guide him into all truth!

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

PART THE FIRST.

THE AUTHOR ENDEAVOURS TO RECONCILE THE MINDS OF THE BELIEVING
HEBREWS TO THE OFFENSIVE DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSA-
TION, BY SHOWING ITS SUPERIORITY IN EVERY IMPORTANT PARTICULAR
TO THE INSTITUTES OF MOSES. Ch. I.

SECTION I.

*THE WRITER asserts the superiority of Jesus to all former prophets and
messengers of God, and argues the superior regard due to the dispensa-
tion which he was commissioned to introduce. Ch. i. 1—ii. 4.*

1. **THE** author expresses in bold and highly figurative language the dig-
nity of the character, and the importance of the message, of the Head and
Publisher of the new dispensation, ver. 1—3.

GOD, who in many parts, and in many ways¹, spake formerly to our fathers
by the prophets, in these last days hath spoken to us by his son², whom he Ver. 1.
2.

¹ In many parts and in many ways.] πολυμερως, in many parts: i. e. partly by one prophet, partly by another. See Peirce, Newcome, Macknight. πολυτροπως. "This clause," says Dr. Macknight, "does not refer to the different manners in which God revealed himself to the prophets, but to the different ways in which the prophets communicated the revelations they received to the fathers; they did it in types and figures, &c., whereas the gospel revelation was spoken by Christ and his apostles in one manner only, namely in plain language."

² By his son.] εν υιω, by a son. Wakefield. It does not follow that Christ is of a different na-

Ch. I.
Ver. 2.

hath appointed heir¹ of all things, with a view to whom² he even constituted the former dispensations.

That God, whom we of the Hebrew nation have been taught to acknowledge and adore as the sole unrivalled Almighty Sovereign of the universe, selected long ago the posterity of Abraham to be the depositaries of his law, and to preserve in the world the knowledge and worship of himself as the one true and living God. This glorious Being, who communicated his will to our forefathers in past ages by his servants the prophets, revealing it gradually and occasionally, sometimes by visible appearances, sometimes by audible voices, and sometimes by visions and dreams, hath now, of late, been pleased to make an entire revelation of his gracious purposes to mankind, by the clear and direct instruction of a teacher expressly commissioned for this end, upon whom such distinguished honour has been conferred, that in comparison with him all former prophets are but as servants in the household in respect to a son. This illustrious person is appointed to an inheritance worthy of his rank: the dominion over all things is given to him; and though he is not yet in full possession of all his glory, it is nevertheless the fixed purpose of his God and Father that all the nations of the earth shall in due time bow to his authority, and submit to his auspicious government.

ture from former prophets because he is called a son, any more than that the servants of a household are of an inferior nature to the family whom they serve. It is a distinction of rank, not of nature.

¹ *Heir of all things:]* that is, "lord of all things." See Gal. iv. 1. Vide Crellius, Whitby, Macknight. Christ is lord of all things, as the whole human race, Jews and Gentiles, are to become subject to his spiritual authority; that is, to the gospel.

² *With a view to whom.]* δι' ἕνεκα τοῦς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν. Αἰῶν, though it may sometimes signify *world* (which is however doubted by Sykes), see Heb. xi. 3, yet is often used for *age* or *dispensation*. Matt. xii. 32, xiii. 39; Mark x. 30; Luke xviii. 30; 1 Cor. ii. 6, x. 11; Col. i. 26; Heb. vi. 5, ix. 26. Δια with a genitive commonly expresses the instrumental cause, but sometimes also the final cause; and in this sense Grotius understands it here, and supposes a reference to an old proverb amongst the Jews, that the world was made for the Messiah. He appeals to Beza in support of this interpretation of δι' ἕ. Beza on Rom. vi. 4. See also the Scholiast on the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, p. 6., ed. Basil. Also Thucydides *Hist. lib. vi. § 7.* δι' ἕπερ πάντα ἐκινδυνεύον, "for whose sake they put every thing to hazard."—δια λόγων, "with a view to conversation." Joseph. *Antiq. lib. xviii. c. vii. § 7, 8, c. x. § 3.*—δια νοῦς, "with a view to be understood." 1 Cor. xiv. 19. See Locke on the place. "I think the words should be translated 'for whose sake,' or, 'upon whose account,' he made even the ages." Dr. Chandler on Eph. i. 11. This is a remarkable concession, as Dr. Chandler was a high Arian; of which doctrine this text is commonly regarded as one of the chief arguments. Mr. Simpson, *Ess. viii.* considers the plural form as the Hebrew superlative: "by whom he constituted the ages," τοῦς αἰῶνας q. d. this last and most important dispensation, the dispensation of the Messiah. According to this interpretation, the preposition δια retains its usual signification. "*Per Christum vere nova et alia secula Deus condidit, dum per eum plane novam, et a priore longe diversam, rerum ac mundi faciem induxit.*" "*Secula Deus per Christum fecisse dicitur, non quod omnia, quæ unquam extiterunt secula per eum condiderit, sed quod condiderit aliqua, nempe nova et a prioribus diversa, iisque longe feliciora.*" Crellius, Slichtingius.

And indeed it is with a view to this last, most beneficial, universal, and perpetual dispensation, that all preceding dispensations have been introduced and established. The various revelations made from time to time to the ancient patriarchs were intended to prepare the way for a more glorious and universal diffusion of moral light; and all the rites and ceremonies of the law point to the same happy termination. All had a reference to this great teacher, and received their accomplishment in him.

Ch. I.
Ver. 2.

Who being³ an effulgent ray⁴ of his brightness, and an exact image of himself⁵, and conducting all things by his powerful authority⁶, after he

3.

³ *Who being.*] This context contains a description in highly figurative language of the character and condition of Jesus as the Messiah. He is distinguished from all preceding prophets, as a son from a servant;—he is made heir of all things, that is, Jews and Gentiles are equally the subjects of his kingdom. N.B. For this sense of the phrase *all things*, see an excellent dissertation by Mr. Tyrwhitt in *Commentaries and Essays*, vol. ii. No. 1.—With a view to him all former dispensations were arranged.—He is a ray of the divine brightness, as he clearly teaches the will of God;—he is an exact image of God himself, as he controuled the laws of nature at pleasure by the voluntary power of working miracles which was imparted to him;—he conducts all things by the powerful authority of God;—his cause and kingdom are carried on in the world by the irresistible agency of the Almighty;—he made purification of sin;—he consecrated a new and holy community to God;—and he is set down at the right hand of supreme majesty, or of the majesty on high, as he is risen from the dead, has ascended to heaven, and is advanced to universal spiritual dominion. The attentive reader here sees, what from the great influence of prejudice is not usually observed, the regular gradation of circumstances from the original designation of this great teacher through his life, doctrine, miracles, and death, to his glorious resurrection and ultimate advancement to the dignity and honour intended for him. And all this without offering any other violence to the language of the writer than what is usually offered to figurative language, viz. that of not understanding it in a literal sense. And in truth the common interpretation recedes as far from the literal sense, or nearly so, as the interpretation here given.

⁴ *Effulgent ray.*] *απαυγασμα, ἡλιος φεγγος*, the splendour of the sun. Hesychius. *απαυγη, ἡ εκλαμψις*, effulgence. Suidas, Doddridge, Macknight. “*ὡς ων. Participium ων est et præsentis et præteriti imperfecti temporis.*” Crellius. See John ix. 25. The writer is here describing the character of Christ during his personal ministry.

⁵ *An exact image of himself.*] *χαρακτηρ της ὑποστασεως αυτου*. *Χαρακτηρ* is the engraving of a seal, or the impression made by a seal upon wax. *ὑποστασις* is *substance*: the image of his substance is the image of *himself*. See 2 Cor. ix. 4; Slichtingius, Crellius, and Grotius *in loc.* The meaning is probably the same as that of *εν μορφη Θεου*, Phil. ii. 6; and is to be explained of the possession of miraculous powers. Christ being the image of God no more proves his participation of the divine nature, than Adam being made in the image of God proves him to have been also divine. Sykes has an excellent note upon the word *hypostasis*; which, he says, “seems never to have been used to signify *person* till long after St. Paul’s days, and should not be rendered so here. We find the term in metaphysical books applied to certain *properties* of the One God as eminently *subsisting* in him. Plato talks of three hypostases, not meaning three persons; for *unity* and *goodness* made two of these hypostases. Taking, then, *hypostasis* as signifying *Essence* with its properties, the Son is properly the image or just representation of God’s properties, goodness, kindness,” &c.

⁶ *Conducting all things, &c.*] *φερων τε τα παντα τω ρηματι της δυναμεως αυτου*. Crellius understands this clause as exegetical of the preceding: “*φερειν hoc loco nihil aliud est quam movere, agitare.*” Dr. Newcome explains it “bearing before him;” as the Greek word is used in the phrase *αγειν και φερειν παντα*. *Αυτου* undoubtedly refers to God; the author uses *εαυτου* in the next clause where he means to speak of Jesus himself. See Peirce. “*Verbum potentiae per hebraismum est verbum potens.*” Crellius. *q. d.* Ordering all things in the new dispensation by authority from God.

Ch. I.
Ver. 3.

*had by himself made the purification of sins*¹, *sat down at the right hand of supreme majesty*².

This illustrious teacher, like a beam of heavenly radiance, has diffused the clearest light over the divine dispensations: and by the mighty works which he was enabled to perform he exhibited a most striking and awful resemblance of that Being who has all the powers of nature under his controul. During his personal ministry, being armed with authority from God, he thus introduced his kingdom and established his doctrine: and when, by an event which, however unexpected and surprising, was far from being disgraceful to his person or his cause, he had prepared the way for the reconciliation of enemies and the introduction of aliens into covenant with God, he was quickly raised from this state of temporary depression, and advanced to a degree of dignity and glory, superior to what had ever been conferred on any preceding prophet, however venerable or illustrious.

Observe here the address of the author of this epistle, and the tenderness with which he treats the prejudices of his readers, in not immediately mentioning the name of Jesus the despised Nazarene, nor introducing the obnoxious circumstance of his crucifixion, till he had prepared their minds for it, by expressing in the strongest language the dignity of his character and office, and only obliquely hinting at his death in that view of it upon which he afterwards expatiates, and which would be most likely to reconcile the minds of the Hebrew Christians to so mortifying a subject.

This address of the writer has been misunderstood by modern interpreters, and indeed by the ancients, who were converts from heathenism, and who knew little or nothing of Jewish prejudices, customs, and modes of thinking. And those figurative expressions of the writer, which were only intended to describe the dignity of our Lord's character, and the divine energies and authority by which his mission was supported, have been strangely misapplied, as if they taught some unknown and incomprehensible emanation of the person of the Son from that of the Father, and some mysterious com-

¹ *Purification of sins.*] The word *our*, ἡμῶν, in the received text, is wanting in the Alexandrine and other manuscripts. The writer with great address omits the express mention of the obnoxious subject of the crucifixion of Jesus. What he means by purification of sin he explains more at large, ch. ix. and x. δι' ἑαυτῆς, *by himself*, is wanting in some good copies.

² *Right hand of supreme majesty.*] So Mr. Wakefield. Or, "the majesty on high:" i. e. in heaven. An expression borrowed from Ps. cx. 1, and often applied to Christ to express the dignity and authority to which he is now advanced.

munication of the divine essence or substance, and participation of the divine government of the universe, which never entered into the thoughts either of the writer himself or of the simple Hebrew Christians to whom the epistle is addressed, and who had always been taught to believe that there is one God only, who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and all that is therein, who sustains and governs all things without an equal, a rival, or a vicegerent.

Ch. I.
Ver. 3.

2. The writer asserts the great superiority of the Leader of this new dispensation to all former prophets and messengers of God, alluding to his resurrection from the dead, ver. 4—6.

For the explanation of the writer's argument, it is necessary to observe, that the same word in the original is sometimes translated *angel*, that is, a supposed celestial spirit, and sometimes *messenger*, and the connexion of his discourse requires that in this chapter, and the beginning of the next, it should be translated messenger, as referring to those former prophets who had been mentioned in the first verse.

In order likewise to understand the relevance of the writer's quotations, it must be remembered that in the scripture phraseology, *sonship* implies an inheritance. The Israelites were *sons* of God, and their inheritance was Canaan. Christians are also *sons*, and their inheritance is a resurrection to everlasting life. Christ is the *first-born* son, because he is the first who rose from death to immortality; and he is said to be superior to all other prophets, without excepting even Moses himself, who is principally alluded to, though, to avoid offence, not expressly named, because the Christian inheritance to which Jesus leads, and of which he is the first partaker, is infinitely superior to that of Canaan.

It is also evident that this writer frequently quotes passages of scripture merely from the sound of the words³, without any regard to the connexion or to the true meaning of the text; and that the arguments are often of no intrinsic value, being addressed merely to the *professed opinions*, and sometimes, it should seem, even to the *ignorance* of his readers. The writer of

³ *The writer quotes from the sound of words.*] "The Jews," says Dr. Priestley in his preface to this epistle, "having no other books, were always meditating upon their scriptures; which led them to apply passages in them to all occasions, proper and improper, and to draw from them arguments which will not always bear strict examination. This was perfectly natural in their circumstances; and if we had found the case to be otherwise, we should have wanted a valuable argument of the genuineness of these writings, as not suiting the men or the times."

Ch. I.
Ver. 3.

this epistle, whoever he was, is more of an eloquent declaimer than a judicious reasoner. Christianity is not bound to defend all her advocates: the doctrine may be, and undoubtedly is true, though some of the arguments alleged by its friends may be inconclusive, and some of its advocates injudicious.

Let us now return to the proofs which this writer produces of the superiority of the great teacher, whom he does not yet name, to all former prophets.

4. *Being become so much greater than those messengers¹, as he hath obtained by inheritance a more excellent name than they.*

Having been put into possession of the great inheritance, he has obtained the title of a son, while former prophets and messengers of God, however eminent their character, or however important their mission, were not graced with that honourable appellation.

5. *For unto what one of those messengers said God at any time, Thou art my son², this day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son³?*

You recollect a passage in the second Psalm (Ps. ii. 7.) which the Jewish nation universally interpret of the Messiah: he is there called a Son; and

¹ *Those messengers.*] And again ver. 5, *Unto what one of those messengers.* See Sykes. τῶν ἀγγέλων, *those messengers*: viz. οἱ προφῆται, ver. 1. This interpretation, suggested many years ago by an ingenious friend, is adopted by Mr. Wakefield in his *New Translation*. It is surprising that it was never thought of before. But the Gentile Christians from the beginning misunderstood the expressions; and the original error seems to have been propagated from age to age almost without intermission. The Hebrew Christians must, however, have understood the writer in the true sense; for it is evident that they were always strictly Unitarian. See Dr. Priestley's *Hist. of Early Opinions*, vol. iii. book iii. ch. viii.—xii. It was of great importance to establish the fact that Jesus was a prophet superior to all former prophets and messengers of God, without excepting Moses himself; who is unquestionably the person chiefly alluded to, though not yet expressly named. But of what use is it to the inhabitants of this planet to know any thing concerning the arrangement of a supposed celestial hierarchy, or to be informed that other guardian angels, who were before the colleagues of Christ, are now become his inferiors? or who that allows himself to reflect calmly and dispassionately, can suppose that a formal revelation should be made of a fact in which men are so little interested? See Peirce in loc.

² *Thou art my son.*] The second Psalm is generally understood as a prophecy of the Messiah, both by Jewish and Christian interpreters; and Mr. Peirce in his note upon this passage has given a learned and able vindication of this interpretation. Dr. Priestley, however, denies the inspiration of this Psalm, and assigns plausible arguments for his opinion. *Theol. Repository*, vol. iv. p. 98—103. “*Omnes Hebræi fatebantur, quicquid præclarum et magnum de piis hominibus et regibus Israelitarum dictum esset in Libris Vet. Test. id sensu multo eminentiore pertinere ad Messiam, a prophetis varie præfiguratum. Sic omnes Hebræi fatebantur, Psalmum secundum, quanquam in Davide aliquo modo impletum, sensu tamen arcano et sublimiore ad ipsum Messiam pertinere, qui supra omnes Filius Dei, dicendus sit: a Deo genitus, i. e. ad imperium erectus. Hoc semel monuisse sufficiat.*” Rosenmüller.

³ *I will be to him a father, &c.*] Mr. Peirce labours to prove, but I think unsatisfactorily, that this passage is also a prediction of the Messiah.

the spirit of prophecy represents God as giving him that appellation upon a glorious occasion, which though then future is spoken of as present, and which has now actually taken place.

Ch. I.
Ver. 5.

There is also another passage (2 Sam. vii. 14), which, though spoken by Nathan to David, of Solomon, is also applicable in a far more important sense to the Messiah, the purport of which is, I will provide a glorious inheritance for him, and will distinguish him above all his brethren, above all other prophets, teachers, and messengers.

*And when he introduces the first-born again⁴ into the world, he saith⁵,
Let all the messengers of God pay homage to him.*

6.

The xcviith Psalm may be understood as a pompous representation of the introduction of the Messiah's kingdom; and in ver. 7 are these words, Pay homage to him, all ye messengers of God: these being interpreted as an address to the Messiah, are an acknowledgement of his superiority to all former prophets. This call upon the messengers of God is made upon some grand public occasion when this superior prophet is inaugurated into his office. As applied to the great teacher, whose dignity and office I am now describing, it signifies that his second appearance in the world, after his temporary removal from it, was the circumstance which constitutes his great superiority over all former messengers of God.

It needs but little discernment to see how very precarious this argument is, and how entirely it depends upon his reader conceding the principles upon which it is founded. It is also made still more obscure by the unwillingness of the author as yet to introduce the offensive doctrine of the crucifixion of Jesus.

3. Though former prophets are described under very honourable charac-

⁴ *And when he introduces, &c.*] *παλιν εισαγαγη κ. τ. λ.*, "and when he again bringeth in his first-born into the world, i. e. after his resurrection. Mr. Peirce observes, that "the order of the words in the original leads to this sense, and they cannot without violence offered to them bear another translation."

⁵ *He saith.*] Some think that this citation is made from Deut. xxxii. 43, where the LXX. have the very words which are here quoted. But as nothing corresponding to them is found in the Hebrew or the Samaritan, Mr. Peirce suspects them to have been an interpolation; and with the generality of interpreters he supposes the citation to be made with a little variation of expression from Ps. xcvi. 7. That learned writer contends that the Psalm (and even the passage in Deuteronomy) refers to the time when the Gentiles would be gathered into the church, that is, to the reign of the Messiah, which commenced at the resurrection of Christ; and consequently, that the application of the prophecy by the writer of the Epistle is correct and pertinent.

Ch. I. ters, the author of the new dispensation is entitled to superior honours, and advanced to universal dominion, ver. 7—9.

Ver. 7. *And concerning¹ these messengers indeed the scripture saith², Who maketh his messengers winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.*

Former prophets and holy men, who were commissioned to reveal the will of God to mankind, were as ready as the wind or the lightning to obey the orders of the Almighty; yet still, like those inanimate but powerful agents, they acted only in a subordinate and ministerial capacity.

This citation is made from Ps. civ. 4. The design of that beautiful and sublime ode is to celebrate the displays of the divine attributes in the works of creation and providence: the true version of the words in their original connexion is, He maketh the winds his messengers and the flames of fire his ministers. By a bold prosopopœia they represent winds and lightnings as the servants of the Almighty, and yielding obedience to his orders. But this writer, citing the passage more from regard to the sound than to the sense, inverts the meaning of the psalmist, and applies the words as descriptive of the character of the former prophets and messengers of God.

8. *But concerning the son it saith, God is thy throne³ for ever and ever:*
9. *the sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of rectitude. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God⁴, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy associates⁵. Ps. xlv. 6, 7.*

The xlvth Psalm, which, though originally composed to celebrate the nup-

¹ Concerning.] *προς τας αγγελους*, "concerning these messengers." Grotius remarks this as a peculiarity in the style of Luke. Luke xix. 20. But Hallet produces an example from the writings of Paul, Rom. viii. 31. *Introductio* to Peirce on Heb. p. xxxi.

² The scripture saith.] This citation and the succeeding ones are from the Septuagint version: a presumption, as some think, that the epistle was originally written in Greek. "The scripture saith, not he saith: the nominative case is not Θεος, but γραφη understood." Dr. Owen. See Bowyer.

³ God is thy throne.] "*Deus ipse est sedes tua perpetua.*" Grotius. So Wakefield. Newcome adopts the common translation, "thy throne, O God;" and as those are called Gods to whom the word of God came, there is no material objection to this translation: understanding by the word of God, a prince, or a mighty, perhaps, an inspired chief. "God is the support of thy throne." Sykes.

⁴ God, even thy God.] Θεος, ὁ Θεος σου. "The first Θεος should be inclosed between commas, being the Attic vocative, as in the preceding verse. Therefore, 'O God, thy God hath anointed thee,' &c." Mangey and Markland, *apud* Bowyer.

⁵ Associates.] Dr. Doddridge says, "It seems to be intimated here, that as Christ took the special charge of Judea, angels were charged with the government of other countries, in reference to which they are called his fellows or companions." But I am persuaded that the author of this epistle makes no allusion whatever to the groundless notion of guardian angels. The associates here mentioned are former prophets and messengers, beings of the same nature, who, like Jesus himself, were commissioned to reveal the will of God to men.

tials of Solomon, is by the interpreters of our nation commonly applied to the Messiah, represents that great prophet as sustaining a character far superior to that of any of his predecessors; for while they are described as menial servants, this last and greatest prophet is represented in a regal capacity, as invested with high dignity and authority; as a just and righteous prince, who, because of the superior excellence of his character, and importance of his commission, is advanced by his Father and his God to, and powerfully supported in, a station of glory and felicity far beyond those who like him were honoured with a divine commission though in an inferior degree.

Ch. I.
Ver. 9.

The psalm which is here cited is applied by the Jews to the Messiah, and by Christians to Christ. Whether it be a prophecy at all, will bear a question; and how far a prophecy can be admitted as containing a double sense, is a case of exceeding great difficulty; but nothing can be argued from the use made of the prophecies by this writer, because it is plain, from the last citation, that he is satisfied with texts whose sound alone, however distant from the true meaning, is applicable to his purpose.

It is a strange interpretation which some ingenious and learned men⁶ have given of this passage, viz. that Jesus Christ, who had formerly been employed like other guardian angels, his equals, in superintending a particular district, had conducted himself so well in his peculiar province, that, as the reward of his merits, he was now advanced to universal dominion, and his former colleagues are made his subjects. Surely divine revelation was communicated to teach mankind something of more immediate importance than these imaginary revolutions in the celestial hierarchy. The design of the gospel is to make men wise unto salvation; and it contains no information that is not directly conducive to this purpose.

4. The writer having mentioned God as the supporter of the throne of the son, now in the language of the psalmist, Ps. cii. 25, expresses his con-

⁶ *Some learned men.*] Mr. Peirce expounds the text in this manner: "Therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee to a vastly greater regal authority and power than ever belonged to the angels, who before thy inauguration were partners with thee in the government of the world." The learned author observes, in his note upon the passage, "It seems not an unreasonable supposition, that, notwithstanding their holiness and integrity, they might be liable to such mistakes as Christ was not."

But can any reflecting person seriously believe that the government of the world was ever committed to the care of imperfect and fallible beings, who, because of their incapacity, were afterwards deposed, and the forms of government changed?

Ch. I. fidence in the divine immutability as the pledge of the perpetual duration of the Messiah's kingdom, ver. 10—12.

- Ver. 10. *And: thou, Lord¹, in the beginning hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They will perish, but thou remainest²;*
 11. *they will decay altogether like a garment, and like a mantle³ thou wilt fold them up, and they will be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years will not fail.*

This sublime description of the eternity, the immutability, and the almighty power of God, in which the devout psalmist represents the supreme Being as remaining unchangeable in all the glory of his attributes from age to age, while at his pleasure worlds and systems rise and disappear in long succession, and the splendid firmament itself is folded up and laid aside like a robe, inspires a joyful assurance that the kingdom of his son, supported by the arm of his omnipotence, shall bear down all opposition, and shall endure to the end of time.

These words are, by readers whose minds are biassed by popular prejudice, supposed to be addressed to Christ; but there is nothing in the connexion which necessarily leads to this conclusion. As they stand in the hundred and second Psalm they are evidently addressed to God; and a Jew, writing to his countrymen, would never presume to hold that language concerning a prophet, however dignified, which in their sacred writings was uniformly appropriated to the Deity.

5. It was the commission of former prophets not to establish the new dispensation, but to prepare the way for it, ver. 13, 14.

13. *Moreover, to which of those messengers hath he ever said, Sit thou at*
 14. *my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool⁴? Are they not*

¹ *Thou, Lord.*] “In Ps. cii. 25, there is no corresponding Hebrew for *thou, Lord*. Jehovah must be supplied from ver. 21, 22, or God from ver. 24.” Newcome. The words however are found in the LXX. and were probably dropped by negligence from the Hebrew copies. The immutability of God is here declared as a pledge of the immutability of the kingdom of Christ. “To show,” says Emlyn (*Works*, vol. ii. p. 340), “how able his God who had anointed him was, to make good and maintain what he had granted him, a durable kingdom for ever and ever.” See Lindsey’s *Sequel to his Apology*, p. 488.

² *Thou remainest.*] or, thou shalt remain. See Peirce and Macknight. διαμεινεις. “thou wilt endure throughout.” Wakefield.

³ *A mantle.*] περιβολαιον, “an upper garment or cloak.” Beza understands it of the covering of a tent.

⁴ *Thine enemies thy footstool?*] Dr. Macknight observes, that “the eastern princes used to

*all servants swift as winds*⁵, *sent forth upon their ministry for the sake of those who were to be the heirs*⁶ *of salvation?* Ch. I.
Ver. 14.

In the hundred and tenth Psalm Jehovah is introduced as addressing a highly exalted person, whom the psalmist calls "his lord" in these remarkable words, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool." This we all agree⁷ to apply to the Messiah, and to be prophetic of his high dignity and ultimate universal authority and dominion. But do you find any passage in the Jewish scriptures in which this language, or any thing like it, is addressed to any other prophet? Are they styled lords? are they at the right hand of God? are they promised universal empire? No: their office, however honourable and important, was of a humbler nature. They were only servants under the divine controul, swift as the winds to obey the orders they received. Their office was indeed honourable, though secondary and inferior to that of the Son. They were harbingers of the Messiah's kingdom, who by their predictions of his advent, and of the nature and extent of the authority which he was to exercise, prepared the minds of men for the reception of his doctrine, and supplied the most satisfactory proofs of the divinity of his mission. Thus the former prophets were appointed by God to be the instructors and the guides of those who were then to be, and who now are, by their instrumentality, the disciples of this new dispensation, and partakers of its inestimable benefits.

tread upon the necks of their vanquished enemies, in token of their utter subjection, Josh. x. 24. And some of the more haughty ones, in mounting their horses, used them as a footstool."

⁵ *Servants swift as winds.*] λειτουργικά πνεύματα, *ministering winds*. See ver. 7. The writer probably alludes to the comparison he had just made, and means to represent all former prophets as eager in their inferior and menial stations to obey the orders of their sovereign, to wait upon the future heirs of salvation, *i. e.* to deliver those prophecies of the Messiah which would induce those who came after them to receive the gospel.

Our translation uses the phrase *ministering spirits*, which immediately leads the English reader to conceive of angels in this connexion as incorporeal beings. That the words will bear this sense cannot be denied; but there is no reason to suppose that the word πνεύματα is used here in a different sense from that in which it is used in the context. Mr. Peirce, in his Note, endeavours to accommodate the passage to his own strange hypothesis of a revolution in the celestial hierarchy. He allows, however, that the presumption is in favour of the translation *ministering winds*.

But even admitting that "ministering spirits" is the true translation, it would not follow that angels were alluded to. In the Hebrew idiom a man's spirit means *himself*, viz. 2 Tim. iv. 22. "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," *i. e.* with thee. Compare Philem. ver. 25, 1 Cor. ii. 11. "Are they not all ministering spirits?" is therefore no more than if the writer had said, "are they not all *ministers*?"

⁶ *Who were to be heirs.*] "for the sake of those who should afterward belong to the Christian church." Peirce; who observes that the writer only speaks here "of professed Christians, enjoying the gospel, and the subjects of Christ's visible kingdom and church on earth."

⁷ *This we agree.*] See Grotius and Whitby. The latter proves by many testimonies that the Jewish writers interpret this Psalm of the Messiah.

Ch. II. 6. From the pre-eminence of this new and glorious teacher he infers the superior regard due to the dispensation introduced by him. Ch. ii. 1—4.

Ver. 1. *For this cause we ought to give the more earnest attention to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we let them escape*¹.

The superior dignity of the teacher requires superior attention to the doctrine, which we may be sure is of proportionably greater importance, and most worthy of being received and remembered by us.

2. *For if the doctrine delivered by messengers*² *was of such authority that*³
3. *every transgression and disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation*⁴, *which having been first published by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those that heard him*⁵, *God at the same time bearing testimony by signs and wonders*⁶, *and various mighty works, and distributions of the holy spirit, according to his own will?*

This new dispensation cannot be neglected with impunity: for, consider with yourselves, if the legal dispensation which was introduced by messengers and servants, and the dignity and importance of which must have been far inferior to that to which I now allude, was so strongly enforced, that condign punishment, without mitigation or reprieve, was inflicted upon the voluntary offender, can we in similar circumstances hope for mercy? Can

¹ *Let them escape.*] παραρρῶμεν, *run out as leaking vessels*. The word means that we should not let what we have heard *slip by us*, or *run out*, through any negligence or carelessness.—“The figure is taken from water, which easily flows by one if it be not stopped, and by that means kept.” Sykes. “*ne quando præterfluere ea sinamus.*” Bos.

² *Messengers.*] ἀγγελοις, by former prophets, as in the context, commonly interpreted *angels*, and Whitby has a learned note to establish this sense of the word. We know that prophets and messengers, viz. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, &c., were employed at the giving out of the law from Sinai (see Exod. xxiv. 12); but that any celestial created spirits were concerned in it we have no satisfactory evidence.

³ *Was of such authority that, &c.*] So Wakefield. βεβαιος, “*stedfast, and every transgression,*” &c. Newcome, according to the construction of the original. “The threats denounced in the law were all put in execution exactly and rigidly, *i. e.* in the wilderness.” Sykes.

⁴ *Salvation.*] *i. e.* deliverance in general, whether from the bondage of the law, or from the yoke of idolatry and vice. See Tit. iii. 5. It is not necessary to suppose that eternal life and happiness is here intended. Archbishop Newcome explains it of “the doctrine and the means of salvation proposed by such high authority.”

⁵ *By those that heard him.*] From this expression Grotius infers that this epistle was not written by an apostle, but by some disciple of the apostles, such as Luke, to whom he inclines to ascribe it. It is, to say the least, a strong presumption that Paul was not the author; for he always expressly disavows having learned the Christian doctrine from men, even though they were apostles, and affirms that he learned it from Christ alone. See Gal. i. 11. He never would have used the language which occurs here without some qualification.

⁶ *Signs and wonders, &c.*] It is not easy, nor is it material, to know the distinctions of the miraculous powers here mentioned. Peirce has an excellent note upon the passage. “Some,” says Archbishop Newcome, “distinguish thus: that σημειον is a miracle wrought as a sign; τερας, one wrought on inanimate nature; and δυναμις, one wrought on animate nature.”

we expect to escape the most distressing consequences if we reject a dispensation of so much greater value, which was first published by the glorious personage of whom the prophets were the harbingers, which was further taught and explained to us by his messengers, who learned it from his lips, and whose doctrine was attested in the most solemn and convincing manner by those miracles which God enabled them to perform, and by those miraculous powers which he authorized them in various instances to communicate to their disciples. Let not any one think that the rejection of this divine institution is a matter of little consequence; or, that a doctrine introduced into the world with this splendour of miracles may be opposed, abandoned, or even neglected, without the utmost hazard.

Ch. II.
Ver. 4.

SECTION II.

THE WRITER argues, from a variety of considerations, that the nature of the Christian dispensation required that the first teacher of it should be not an angel, or a celestial spirit, but a suffering man.—Ch. ii. 5—18.

1. He affirms that the Christian dispensation was not committed to the direction of angels, ver. 5.

Moreover, unto angels⁷ (God) hath not committed the world to come⁸, concerning which we speak.

5.

¹ *Moreover, unto angels.*] *Moreover, γαρ*, introducing, not an inference, but a collateral remark. The author enters upon a new subject: having proved that the founder of the new dispensation was superior to all former prophets and messengers of God, he now sets himself to prove that, exalted as he is in dignity, he is nevertheless in nature inferior to angels; and is in this respect altogether similar to his brethren. "*Angels:*" so Wakefield. Here the connexion requires that the word which in the preceding section means *human beings, messengers of God*, should now be taken in the sense of *celestial spirits*; such as angels are supposed to be. This change in the signification of a word, without giving notice of it, though a great fault in composition, is not out of character in our author, who writes rhetorically rather than logically; and often takes the liberty of playing upon his words. In ver. 7 of the first chapter, he uses the words in a sense totally different from their original meaning as they stand in the civth Psalm. And if the common interpretation be correct, he changes the sense of *πνευμα* in ver. 14, from the sense in which he uses it ver. 7, without giving any notice of the alteration.

It is not often that a writer sets himself to prove, that a human being is a human being, and nothing more than a human being. But this writer, as though he were aware that the lofty expressions which he had used were liable to be misunderstood, endeavours to guard his readers against this misconception by stating in the most explicit terms, that by all he had said concerning the dignity of the Founder of the new covenant, and his superiority to the

Ch. II.
Ver. 5.

The prophets of God, who are called his angels, or messengers, were employed by him to conduct the Jewish dispensation, sanctioned by temporal promises and threatenings, in its origin, and through the various stages of its progress; and I have just been proving to you, by arguments the most conclusive, that the great prophet of the new dispensation is superior to them all, as a son to a servant, as a master to his emissaries and messengers. You are not, however, from the ambiguity, or from the strength of language which I have used, to draw conclusions which were not designed, nor to infer that the person of whom I have been discoursing is a being of a nature superior to man. The reverse is true. For though the dispensation which I have described, and which has been introduced in the awful and magnificent manner which you have heard, is a dispensation greatly superior to any which preceded it, and is enforced by the momentous sanctions of a future life, yet I can assure you that the direction of it is not committed to celestial and angelic beings, but that the illustrious founder and teacher of it is a mere human being, a man like ourselves.

2. The writer further remarks, that certain circumstances are foretold concerning the Messiah in the book of Psalms, one of which still remains unfulfilled, while the others have received their accomplishment in the person of Jesus, ver. 6—9.

6. *But a certain writer¹ hath somewhere testified, saying, What is man*

angels or prophets of the old dispensation, he never intended to represent him as superior to angels or celestial beings; for as it had been foretold of him that he should be inferior to angels, so in fact it was indispensably requisite to the accomplishment of the object of his mission, that he should be a proper human being in every respect similar to those whom he came to redeem from vice and misery; and not only so, but that he should also be a sufferer and a victim previously to his advancement to his kingdom and glory.

Such were the pains which the sacred writers took, and this writer in particular, to impress upon their readers a correct judgement concerning the person of their Master, and to prevent their figurative expressions from being misunderstood. Yet such was the shame and scandal of the cross, and the dread of being exposed to scorn as the disciples of the crucified Nazarene, that in the very age of the apostles, and in defiance of the plainest language of the New Testament, men began to introduce those corrupt opinions concerning Christ, which gradually grew up to the deification of his person, and ultimately to the monstrous doctrine of a Triune God; which for fifteen centuries has been the belief and the disgrace of the apostate church.

⁸ *The world to come.*] οικουμενην μελλουσαν. It is agreed among critics, that the Christian dispensation is here intended; but why called οικουμενην μελλουσαν, *the future inhabited world*? Some think because it is styled a new creation, Isa. lvi. 17; others represent the expression as synonymous with αιων, and render it *the succeeding age*; the temple being standing when this epistle was written. See Newcome's *Translation*. Dr. Macknight and others suppose the writer to allude to the object of the divine promise under the Christian dispensation, namely, a future life, as distinguished from the promise of the Mosaic covenant, which was only the earthly Canaan.

¹ *A certain writer.*] I cannot think that Mr. Peirce, notwithstanding all the learning and

that thou art mindful of him, or any son of man² that thou regardest him? Ch. II.
Thou madest him a little lower³ than the angels⁴, thou crownedst him with Ver. 7.
glory and honour, and thou hast set him over the works of thy hands⁵.
Thou hast subjected all things under his feet. Now in thus subjecting 8.
all things to him, he hath left nothing that is not subjected to him⁶.

This quotation from Psalm viii. 4—6 may be understood as prophetic of some illustrious person who is to be appointed universal governor, and to whose authority all things without exception are to be made subject.

But now we do not yet see that all things are subjected to him. —8.

There is no person who has yet appeared to whom this part of the prophecy can apply; and therefore it is not from this circumstance that we can discover the illustrious object of it. But there is one, a distinguished character to whom I have all along alluded, and whom I shall immediately name, in whom the first part of the prophecy hath received its proper accomplishment; and in whom, without doubt, the last and the most glorious part will in due time be amply verified.

But we see Jesus⁷, who was made a little lower than angels, that he, 9.

ingenuity which he has exercised upon the subject, has by any means proved, in a satisfactory manner, that the eighth Psalm was a prophecy of Christ. This is one instance among many of the very loose manner of quoting and applying scripture so familiar to the writer of this epistle, and probably to the Jews of his time.

² *Man, or any son of man.*] See Wakefield.

³ *A little lower.*] βραχυ τι. Peirce and many others observe that this expression may be translated, “for a short time;” which translation best accommodates the Arian hypothesis; but the common translation is equally correct, and better adapted to the original Psalm: there is, therefore, no reason to alter it. See Sykes.

⁴ *Angels.*] The original word is Elohim, *gods*; and probably means to express beings of an order superior to mankind. It never signifies *messengers*, which is the primary sense of the word (מלאך) that is commonly translated *angel*.

⁵ *And thou hast set him over the works of thy hands.*] This clause is wanting in the Clermont and Corbey and in many other ancient manuscripts, and likewise in the Syriac version; but it is found both in the Hebrew and the LXX., and is probably genuine.

⁶ *He hath left nothing, &c.*] The apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 27, applies the same text to the dominion of Christ: hence some have concluded that Paul was the author of this epistle; but this is precarious. The apostle's inference is different, viz. it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him.

⁷ *We see Jesus.*] Observe here, that this is the first mention of the name of Jesus, which the author does not introduce till he has raised in the minds of the Hebrew Christians the highest ideas of his office and character; and though it is necessary to mention his sufferings, he does it in the slightest manner, it is only tasting death; which he represents at the same time as an event fraught with the most beneficial consequences to all mankind, as the result of the free goodness of God, and as immediately connected with and crowned by his advancement to the highest dignity and honour. This caution of the writer in introducing the name of Jesus has escaped the notice of most expositors. He seems to have intended the epistle for the inspection of the unconverted, as well as the converted Hebrews; and the fear of hurting the prejudices of the Jews, shows that the writer was educated in the school of Paul. See Peirce on ver. 11.

Ch. II. *by the gratuitous goodness of God, might taste death for every man, for*
Ver. 9. *the suffering of death*¹ *crowned with glory and honour.*

The person whom I mean is Jesus, the head of the new dispensation ; a name by many despised and abhorred ; but to you, I trust, dear and venerable. He is the master that we serve, the founder of our faith, greatly pre-eminent over all former prophets and teachers. Not indeed in his nature ; for he like them is inferior to angels ; and it was fit he should, for he was destined to be a sufferer ; and, by the free goodness of God, he was, for the benefit of all mankind, delivered up to a temporary death. But this event was so far from being disgraceful to him, or to his cause, that by his resurrection from the grave and ascension to the right hand of God, which was the reward of his voluntary sufferings, he is advanced to greater dignity and honour than any human being before him ever attained, which plainly points him out as the proper object of the remarkable prophecy which I have just cited, and as destined in the divine councils to be the future lord and governor of all things.

Upon this paragraph we may observe, 1. That this passage makes it probable that the epistle was written, if not by Paul himself, yet by one of the companions or hearers of that apostle : for the same prophecy is quoted with the same view, 1 Cor. xv. 25—27.

2. The eighth Psalm does not appear to have any peculiar claim to be regarded as prophetic of the Messiah. It is a poetical composition which beautifully expresses the condescension and goodness of the divine Being in the formation of man, and in the dominion granted to him over the inferior creatures. This therefore is an additional instance of quotation by accommodation from the Old Testament, so familiar with this writer, and with the Jews in his time.

3. The word Elohim, which in this Psalm is translated *angel*, is not the same with that which is usually so translated, and it never signifies a messenger. It is commonly rendered God, or Gods, and it expresses the dignity of the human race, as being little inferior to celestial spirits. The writer here applies the expression to Jesus in the same sense, and means thereby to show that he was not an angel but a man. He insinuates that it was requisite that he should be a man, that he might be liable to death, of which, if he had been a celestial spirit, he would not have been susceptible. He was inferior to angels that he might taste of death.

¹ *For the suffering of death.]* The hyperbaton in this verse is noticed by all the critics.

4. *He tasted death for every man*, i. e. all were benefited by his death, which sealed a new and universal covenant, in which all mankind were parties. This is explained hereafter: at present, for the purpose of softening the prejudices of the Hebrews, it is just alluded to as the result of the merciful appointment of God. He did but taste of death: he saw no corruption: he was raised on the third day, before any change took place; and the reproach was obliterated almost as soon as it began.

Ch. II.
Ver. 9.

5. The parts of the prophecy which are represented as actually fulfilled are, First, that he was made lower than the angels, a mortal man, who by divine appointment suffered death. Second, that he is now advanced to glory and honour, that is, raised from the dead and exalted at the right hand of God.

6. One part of the prophecy remained unfulfilled. "We do not yet see all things put under him."

Nor do we, who live at the distance of seventeen centuries, yet see this prediction completely verified. But if there be truth in prophecy, the religion of Jesus will eventually become the religion of the world. The doctrine of the cross will ultimately bear down all opposition; and those events which, to our limited apprehensions, appear most hostile to its progress, will in the end appear to have been essential parts of the wise and mysterious plan of Providence, and subservient to the ultimate and universal triumph of the Christian cause.

3. That there was an expediency in appointing that the Saviour of men should be a sufferer, ver. 10.

For it became him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, to make the leader of many sons² to glory, even the captain of their salvation, perfect through sufferings³.

10.

² *The leader of many sons.*] Wakefield. *εις δοξαν αγαγοντα*. "It is not God that is here said to be bringing many sons to glory, for then it would have been in natural construction *αγαγοντι*, not *αγαγοντα*, but it is the Captain of their Salvation who was to bring many sons to glory. The sense of the place is, It became the goodness and wisdom of God to make his Son, who was to bring many sons to glory,—sons, who were to go through many sufferings in this life,—to make his Son, I say, an example to them to bear sufferings, to encourage them to persevere steady and immovable, till they obtained the reward of their sufferings." Sykes.

³ *To make perfect through sufferings.*] "*τελειωσαι*, to bring to an end, to finish, to perfect: the possession of his kingdom was the perfection of our Leader." Sykes. Dr. Doddridge approaches nearer to the true meaning of the author: "It became him, &c. to make the leader of salvation completely fit for the full execution of his office by a long train of sufferings, whereby he was, as it were, solemnly consecrated to it." There can be no doubt that this

Ch. II.
Ver. 10.

You might naturally expect, like the rest of your nation, that the great deliverer would appear as a prince and a conqueror; whereas it is evident, as I have just observed, that the honour to which Jesus is advanced was attained by the suffering of death: and, however contrary the event may prove to our views and hopes, there can be no doubt, that the glorious Being who is the first cause and the last end of all, and by whose councils the whole plan of man's salvation is conducted, had the wisest and the best reasons for what he has chosen to bring to pass. And we may be assured that no better way could be devised for executing his gracious purpose, than by appointing him, who was ordained to conduct multitudes of the sons of God to glory and felicity, and to be himself the first who should take possession of it as their pattern and forerunner, to become qualified and completed for this high and sacred office, and as it were consecrated to it, by passing through a previous scene of suffering and death. Some of the most obvious reasons for this appointment I shall proceed to state.

4. This glorious leader and his followers are all equally the spiritual descendants of Abraham, ver. 11—13.

11. *For both he who sanctifieth¹, and they who are sanctified, are all² of one Father³; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.*

is the sense in which the word *τελειωω*, to make perfect, is used in this epistle (see ch. vii. 28), and this sense, as Peirce observes, is confirmed by the words which immediately follow. See ver. 11.

"I would observe," says Dr. Priestley, "that all that follows in this chapter has no other object, and he never could have written it with any other idea, than that of Christ being as much a man as any of his followers who bore the Christian name."

¹ *He who sanctifieth*] "is he that puts persons into a separate state from others in respect to God; and they that are sanctified ought to live up to the relation they stand in to God." Sykes.

² *Are all.*] Peirce thinks that by the use of the universal term *all*, the writer means to allude in a manner as inoffensive as possible to the conversion of the Gentiles.

³ *Of one Father.*] *ἐξ ἑνός*. The original is elliptical: some supply the ellipsis with the word *God*, ver. 9. "The sanctifier Christ, and the sanctified, his disciples, are all of one Father, God." Newcome. So Sykes. "all of one family; all the descendants of Adam, and in a sense the seed of Abraham." Doddridge. "*Εξ ἑνός sc. αἵματος, vel σπέρματος, vel γένους. Omnes eandem habent, vel habere debebant naturam: quam interpretationem sequentia confirmant. cap. v. 1. Conveniens erat auctorem salutis humanæ non esse angelum, sed humana natura præditum.*" Rosenmuller. "All of them are of one father Abraham—the father of the faithful, the great pattern of believing." Peirce. This is the interpretation adopted in the paraphrase, but I am doubtful whether that of Rosenmuller does not better suit the connexion. "They are all," says Dr. Whitby, "of one original and nature." It is the professed design of the writer in this section to show that the founder of the new dispensation, though far superior in rank to all preceding prophets, was nevertheless a human being in the proper sense of the word, and nothing more than such. As such, he acknowledges that he is not ashamed to call his disciples his brethren; that like them he is dependent upon the protection of God, to whom he is to give an account of his mission, and to present at the throne of God those who through divine mercy have been saved by him, his children, his beloved disciples, who are also beings of the same order and nature with himself. After which, the writer proceeds to

This illustrious teacher, who sanctifies his disciples and separates them from the unbelieving world, as a people consecrated to God, and they who are thus consecrated by him, are all of them sons of God, the common parent of mankind, they are all beings of the same species, partakers of the same common nature, and are all the children of Abraham the holy patriarch, who is renowned for the confidence which he placed in the promises of God. He does not therefore assume any superiority over his faithful disciples; but though honoured with such an important mission he represents himself as their brother in rank, and their companion in tribulation, equally with them depending upon and confiding in the promises of God, to whom all his success was owing.

Ch. II.
Ver. 11.

Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren⁴, in the midst of the assembly I will celebrate thy praise.

12.

This is the language which David, in the twenty-second Psalm, ver. 22, puts into the mouth of that holy person who is the object of this prophecy, and who is the same that we now call our master; and who thus condescends to speak of his faithful disciples as his brethren.

And again, I will continue to put my trust in him. And again⁵, Behold I, and the children whom God hath given me⁶.

13.

The same conclusion may be drawn from a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, ch. viii. 17, 18; where a great teacher predicted under the name of Immanuel, who is the person of whom I am speaking, the head of the

show how necessary it was that he who came to save from the curse of the law should himself be a man like his brethren subject to the law.

It may be remarked that this writer, who so explicitly asserts the proper humanity of Christ, makes no reserve, puts in no salvo in favour of a superior and divine nature which was not subject to these humiliations. In truth, he had no idea of any such distinction. The fable of two distinct natures existing in one person was not then invented.

⁴ *To my brethren.*] "The passage here cited," says Peirce, "is taken from Ps. xxii. 22; and the whole Psalm seems to me to belong entirely and solely to Christ. That he was not ashamed to call his disciples *brethren*, we learn from John xx. 17, Matt. xxv. 40, xxviii. 10."

⁵ *And again.*] The two clauses here cited stand together in Isaiah viii. 17, 18; but being cited as separate testimonies, it has been conjectured that the writer takes the former from Psalm xviii. 2, or 2 Sam. xxii. 3. See Peirce and Sykes *in loc.* But it seems equally probable that the words *καὶ παλιν* have been repeated from the first clause, by the inadvertence of some early transcriber. This was the opinion of Wall. See Bowyer.

⁶ *Behold I, &c.*] This is language which, according to the interpretation of Mr. Peirce and Mr. Dodson, the prophet puts into the mouth of Immanuel, or the Messiah. It seems to be introduced here to show that the Messiah was the heir of Abraham's faith; and that believers, being his spiritual children, were together with him the spiritual descendants of Abraham. See Peirce *in loc.* and Dodson on Isa. viii. 17. "The argument," says Peirce, "stands thus: All that believe in God, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, are children of Abraham. Christ, as appears by this testimony, believed in God; consequently he must himself be a son of Abraham; and all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, must be his brethren."

Ch. II.
Ver. 13.

new dispensation, declares his resolution to place his confidence in God under great difficulties and trials; and thus approves himself a genuine son of Abraham: and as he immediately speaks of his disciples as children given to him by God, they likewise are with him the spiritual descendants of the believing patriarch, and heirs of the promise.

In this way does the author represent to the believing Hebrews that the great leader of the Christian faith was, and that it was foretold that he would be, like their renowned ancestor, eminent for his firm and cheerful reliance upon God in seasons of great difficulty and trial, and thus he gradually reconciles their minds to the acknowledgement of a suffering Messiah.

5. As he came to deliver men, and not angels, from the curse of the law and the fear of death, it was necessary that he should be a man and not an angel, ver. 14—16.

14. *Inasmuch then as these children partook in common of flesh and blood, he also in the very same manner participated¹ in the same, that through death*
 15. *he might destroy² him who hath the power of death, that is, the devil³, and might deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject*

¹ *In the very same manner participated.] παραπλησιως μετεσχε.* The expression in the public version, "took part" of the same, seems to imply that the participation of human nature was, in Jesus, a voluntary act; an idea which the original by no means conveys. Mr. Peirce well observes, that the word παραπλησιως does not here import 'a faint likeness,' or 'resemblance,' but 'a proper and exact conformity;' he partook of flesh and blood as completely as the children do."

² *Destroy.] καταργηση.* The word properly signifies to render ineffectual. Rom. iii. 31. See Dr. Macknight. It might have been rendered, *to defeat, to bring to nought.* 1 Cor. i. 28, ii. 6, xv. 24. See Peirce.

³ *That is, the devil.]* Some have thought that the devil is said to have the power of death, because he is the inflicter of death; a power which Mr. Peirce, who is willing to attribute it to him to a certain extent, justly thinks ought not to be attributed to him universally. But, in fact, what evidence is there that he possesses it in the least degree? Peirce himself, and many others, understand the expression as an allusion to his having tempted our first parents in paradise, and thereby bringing death upon themselves and their posterity; an assumption for which the account of the Fall lays no foundation. But what inference is too incredible or too formidable, if the fact be once admitted, that a being such as the devil is commonly described to be, shares with the Supreme in the government of the universe?

The devil, which is sometimes a personification of the principle of evil, is, in this passage, probably put for the accusing and condemning power, that is, THE LAW, which accuses, convicts, and passes a sentence of condemnation upon all who are subject to its authority, and who break its commands; and might well fill the hearts of all who are amenable to its tribunal with dismay. It is the law which thus possesses the power of death, and which being abolished by the death of Christ, all who believe in him are released from its condemning sentence, and emancipated from the fear of death.

For this interpretation, which appears to me to remove all difficulties from a very obscure text, I am indebted to the late Samuel Prime, Esq. of Whitton, whose zeal in biblical research was only equalled by his enlightened liberality in the diffusion of Christian knowledge.

to slavery. *For it layeth not hold of angels⁴, but it layeth hold of the posterity of Abraham.* Ch. II.
Ver. 16.

The great object to be accomplished by the mission of Christ was to deliver his brethren the children of Abraham from the fear of death; a fear which in some persons, and in some circumstances, is so prevalent as to take away all comfort and to make life itself a burden.

This is a fear to which angels and beings of a superior order are not exposed, not being liable to mortality; but it is in a peculiar degree incident to the descendants of Abraham, who are not only, as men, subject to the universal law of death, but who are also placed under a law which pronounces sentence upon every transgressor, without remission, exposing to a fearful and unknown doom every one who falls short of sinless obedience.

It was therefore expedient that he who was commissioned to deliver his brethren from the curse of the law, should be, not an angel, or a being of superior order, who could feel no true sympathy with their condition; but a proper human being, in every respect like themselves, not only as a man, but as one of the posterity of Abraham, born under the law, exposed to the weaknesses and fears of human nature, and who himself suffered the penalty of the law.

Not indeed as a transgressor, for his obedience was perfect, but with a nobler purpose; that by death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Do not mistake me: do not imagine that Jesus died to exterminate some evil spirit who possesses power to increase the agonies of death. No such mischievous being exists in the works of God. The devil which Christ abolished by his death, was the accusing and condemning power, the law itself, which with relentless severity pronounced sentence upon transgressors, and thus possessed the dreadful power of adding horror to the

⁴ *It layeth not hold of angels:] i. e. the fear of death.* This interpretation is advanced by the late Rev. John Palmer of Macclesfield, and ingeniously and learnedly supported by him in the *Theological Repository*, vol. v. p. 161. It is greatly to be preferred to that of Sykes, Peirce, Newcome, and others; viz. "For indeed he, *i. e.* Christ, helpeth not angels." The text as it stands in the public version, "Verily he took not on him *the nature* of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham," is a lamentable proof how much King James's translators were misled by their prejudices. Perhaps the words might be rendered thus: He, *i. e.* the devil, the accusing power, layeth not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham. This would keep up the spirit of the allegory. And this interpretation would supply a very obvious answer to Dr. Sykes's just and pertinent question: "Why should it be said that Christ came to help the seed of Abraham, and not the seed of Adam?" The true answer to which is: That it was the posterity of Abraham *only*, who, living under the dominion of the law, were subject to its accusation, and whose lives became a burden to them in consequence of that sentence of condemnation of which they were apprized, and from which they could not escape.

Ch. II.
Ver. 16.

horrors of death. But the death of Christ, which sealed the covenant of pardon and peace, has put an end to the law, and disarmed death of its terrors.

We see here with what caution and ingenuity the sacred writer insinuates to the believing Hebrews that most offensive of all doctrines, that the law having answered its purpose is now completely abolished, and that believers under the new covenant are no longer subject to its yoke.

6. A complete resemblance to his brethren was requisite to inspire the leader of the new dispensation with sympathy, and to qualify him for the office of high-priest, ver. 17, 18.

17. *So that it was right¹ for him in all things to be like to his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest² in things relating to God, in order to propitiate the sins of the people³.*

It was quite necessary that this great deliverer should be in every circumstance similar to his brethren, both as to his being a real man, and subject to the dominion of the law; for without this he would not have been duly qualified to exercise that office which he now sustains, and upon which I shall presently expatiate more at large, namely that of a high-priest, under a dispensation which proclaims mercy to those who believe: under which character he conducts the Christian dispensation as one grand act of temple

¹ *It was right.*] See Wakefield's translation.

² *A merciful and faithful high-priest.*] This is the first mention of Jesus Christ as a high-priest, upon which character the writer afterwards expatiates at large. He is merciful and faithful, *ελεημων και πισος*, i. e. the high-priest of a dispensation in which *mercy* is promised to *faith*, as distinguished from *works*, which were required by the law, on the failure of which it pronounces a sentence of condemnation.

³ *To propitiate the sins of the people.*] Not *εις το ιλασκεσθαι περι των αμαρτιων*, not, as is commonly rendered, *to propitiate*, or "*make reconciliation for the sins of the people*," but to *propitiate* or *reconcile* the sins themselves. Mr. Peirce, who admits this to be the literal interpretation, says "there is no sense in it." But if it be interpreted as a *prosopopœia*, the sins, the accusing powers, which clamour for punishment, may be quieted, appeased, silenced, by the dispensation of the gospel, as the law, the condemning power, is abolished by it.

Dr. Sykes also observes, "The form of expression here is quite unusual: *ιλασκεσθαι Θεον*, or *περι αμαρτιων*, *to appease God*, or *to appease God on account of sins*, is frequent; but the expression here used, *to reconcile sins*, or *appease sins*, is something very particular." He well explains it, that "Christ, as a high-priest, did his part that our sins might be passed over, and not brought to account." Had it occurred to these learned writers to consider sins in this connexion as a personification of the accusing power, as prosecutors invoking the penalty of the law, the construction of the language would have been easily explained.

The meaning probably is, to remove all legal obstructions and disqualifications, so that those who were excluded as sinners from the privileges of the old covenant might be admitted to the benefits of the new dispensation, and might be called and made *holy*.

worship; and thus he silences the clamours of sin, invoking vengeance and condemnation, as he abolishes the law which passes the sentence of death.

Ch. II.
Ver. 17.

This I believe to be the true meaning of the writer, whose words are not that he propitiates God for the sins of men, but that he propitiates the sins themselves. Having in the preceding sentence personified the law as the condemning power whose sentence aggravated the terrors of death, but which was abolished by Christ, he now personifies the sins of transgressors as accusing powers, which were not utterly destroyed like the law, but which were silenced and pacified by that dispensation of grace, to the ministration of which Christ was consecrated by his death, and which proclaimed *mercy* to those who *believed*. On which account Christ is called a *merciful* and *faithful* high-priest; or a high-priest of that dispensation which requires faith as the condition of mercy.

For wherein he hath suffered being tried, he is able to help⁴ those who are under trial.

18.

If it was an angel that suffered and not a man, or if he suffered as some think only in appearance, his instructions would lose their effect, and his example would be of no use; for the cases of the teacher and the disciple would be totally dissimilar: but just in the degree in which he has suffered he can benefit his fellow sufferers. Since, therefore, he was a man like ourselves, who had all the frailties, all the feelings, and all the fears of a human being, and who suffered all the pains which any other man in the same circumstances would have endured, and since, by the exercise of faith and resignation, he triumphed over the fear of death, and was in due time raised from the grave, his doctrine and example may now be of the most essential benefit to his fellow sufferers, both as it teaches them to bear affliction of every kind with dignity and fortitude, and as it enables them to triumph over death in its most terrible aspect, by exciting the assured and glorious hope, that because he lives they shall live also.

⁴ *Able to help.*] βοηθησαι "means to encourage, to strengthen, not by any supernatural aid, but by the example which Christ himself exhibited of suffering in the cause of truth and of God." *Theolog. Repos.* vol. v. p. 165.

SECTION III.

Ch. III. *THE WRITER briefly touches upon the superiority of Jesus to Moses.*

Ch. iii. 1—6.

The writer of this epistle having, ch. i., stated the great superiority of the founder of the new dispensation to all former prophets and teachers, and having, ch. ii., proved that in order to accomplish the purposes of his mission it was necessary that he should be not an angelic being, but a frail and suffering man, advances now to assert the superiority of Jesus to Moses. Upon a subject so delicate and so unacceptable to the prejudices of his countrymen he touches with great tenderness and brevity, and the train of his argument stands thus :

Believers in the gospel constitute one great family, ver. 2, 6, of which the father and ruler is God, ver. 4. To this family Moses in his place was a faithful servant, the Mosaic institute being intended to prefigure and attest the Christian dispensation, ver. 5. Whereas Jesus is a son in the same family, appointed by the Father to rule over the whole household, ver. 6.

With this general key to the author's meaning it will be easy to interpret particular expressions.

1. He calls upon the believing Hebrews to consider the perfect resemblance between the fidelity of Jesus and that of Moses, ver. 1, 2.

- Ver. 1. *Wherefore, holy brethren¹, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider*
 2. *attentively this apostle and high-priest² of our profession, Jesus³, who was faithful to him who appointed him⁴, as Moses also was, in all the family of God⁵.*

¹ *Holy brethren.*] See Peirce on the text, who recollects no other instance in which Christians are directly addressed under this character, and supposes an allusion to ch. ii. 11.

² *High-priest.*] As an apostle, or divine messenger, he was superior to Moses ; as a high-priest, he excelled Aaron.

³ *Jesus.*] The received text reads *Jesus Christ*. But *Χριστος* is omitted in the Alexandrine and other ancient manuscripts, and in the Æthiopic and Vulgate versions, and by Griesbach. It is plain that this writer purposely avoids speaking of Jesus as the Messiah, till he directly asserts, and in his way proves, his superiority to Moses, ver. 6.

⁴ *To him who appointed.*] *τῷ ποιήσαντι* for this sense of the word *ποίηω* see Mark iii. 14,

My beloved fellow worshipers, children of the same father, brethren of the same deliverer, separated by your faith in him from the unbelieving world, and consecrated to the service of God; who have wisely accepted the invitation of the gospel, and have been admitted to participate in its divine privileges and exalted hopes, reflect seriously upon the facts which I have just stated. Meditate upon the conduct of Jesus our master, the authorized teacher, the great high-priest of that new dispensation into which we are introduced; remember that he was a frail suffering mortal man like ourselves, who felt and endured all that we should feel and endure in similar circumstances: consider how hard a task he had to accomplish, and mark the faithfulness, the zeal, the fortitude, the perseverance with which he fulfilled the office assigned him. Of Moses, the great prophet and minister of the old dispensation, we read, Numbers xii. 7, that God bore testimony to him, that his servant Moses was faithful in all his house; and what can be more evident than that the same honourable character is equally applicable to him who has been appointed to the still more dignified office of publishing the new and better covenant?

Ch. III.
Ver. 2.

2. Jesus is superior even to Moses himself, being a son and a ruler in that family in which Moses sustained no higher character than that of a faithful servant, ver. 3—6.

For⁶ he hath received as much greater honour than Moses, as the ruler of a household⁷ hath more honour than the household.

3.

You may be surprised, and your feelings may be shocked at what I am about to assert; but you will find it strictly true. This Jesus, this frail

and Peirce's note. Some of the ancients objected to the genuineness of this epistle, because Jesus is here represented as *made* by God.

⁵ *Family of God.*] In the original it is "his family," that is, as some understand it, the family committed to Moses. See Archbishop Newcome's Translation. The writer unquestionably alludes to Num. xii. 7, where God saith, "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house." The house or family here mentioned is therefore the family of God—it is *all* the household—it includes, therefore, the Christian as well as the Jewish church—in this family Moses is declared to be nothing more than a servant—but Jesus, as the Messiah, is universally allowed to be a son, and therefore, by the authority of the Jewish scriptures themselves, Moses is inferior to Jesus.

⁶ *For.*] "*γὰρ, referendum ad. v. 1. Nunc enim ratio affertur, cur attendere debeamus Jesum, quia nempe major est Mose.*" Rosenmuller.

⁷ *The ruler of a household.*] *ὁ κατασκευαστής.* "the regulator of a family." Wakefield. "He who framed the household, he who constituted, disposed, set in order any society, hath greater honour than that society or any part of it." Newcome. "*Οὐκ. est familia—ὁ κατ. non est Ædilis, ut multi volunt, sed omnibus rebus necessariis, instruens domum et familiam.* v. Matt. xi. 10." Rosenmuller.

CH. III.
Ver. 3.

suffering man, of whom I have been discoursing, is superior to our great prophet and lawgiver, even to Moses himself. And as I have alluded to that scripture in which Moses is declared to have been a faithful servant to the household of God, I will add, that Jesus, our teacher and lawgiver, is as much superior to Moses, as the ruler of a family is to any one of the domestics, or even to all united.

4. *For every household is under some ruler, but he who ruleth all things is God¹.*

In every family there must be some person who has the management and chief direction of the affairs of the household; and in the great moral family to which I allude, the church of God, in all its comprehension and to its utmost extent, the chief manager, the parent and governor of the whole, is God. It is he that appoints to every individual his respective station and employment, and to him they are accountable.

5. *And Moses indeed was faithful in all the family of God² as a servant, for a testimony³ to those things which were afterwards to be spoken.*

The scripture assures us that Moses was faithful to the great family of God, in which he bore a distinguished office: but it expressly declares that the character he sustained was only that of a servant; and the office he performed to the universal household, including all the people of God, of all ages and countries, was by bearing testimony to the truth and divinity of the doctrine which was to be published by a greater teacher at a remote period of time. This he did both directly, by announcing that such a teacher and prophet would appear, and indirectly, by arranging his institute under divine direction, so as to be typical of, and preparatory to, another and a better dispensation.

¹ *He who ruleth all things.*] “Every society is and must be ordered and regulated by somebody who is considered as superior to those who are under his jurisdiction; and to show that this is a true state of the case, it extends to all things, and to the government of all; even to God the supreme governor of all, who, therefore, has the supreme glory and honour.” Sykes.

² *The family of God.*] So Wakefield. Gr. *in all his family*. See ver. 2.

³ *For a testimony.*] “The meaning seems to be, that Moses was designed to prepare God’s church for the message which Christ was to bring; and that by his writings he so testified of Christ, as that they who duly attended to what he said might come to a certain knowledge of the truth of what Christ should deliver when he came. This is a further hint of the superiority of Christ to Moses. If Moses was thus to prepare men for Christ, it is but reasonable to think that Christ was superior to him.” Peirce. “Moses was faithful to his declaration of those things which were afterwards more particularly spoken of. He declared that one should arise like himself. And the prophets afterwards spoke of several particulars about the person of the Messiah, his sufferings, and his being to be cut off.” Sykes.

But Christ⁴ as a son, over his family⁵, which family⁶ we are, if we hold fast the confidence⁷, even the rejoicing of our hope, firm⁸ unto the end.

Ch. III.
Ver. 6.

Your surprise at my assertion of the superiority of Jesus, the founder of the new dispensation, to Moses, the legislator of the Sinai covenant, will be considerably diminished, when I remind you that Jesus is the Christ: that this glorious but suffering man, of whose dignity and humiliation I have been so long discoursing, is that very Messiah of whom Moses prophesied, and to whom the hopes and expectations of our nation have been so long and so eagerly directed. But the Messiah is by all acknowledged to be the son of God; and therefore, of course, he takes precedence in that household over which his Father has appointed him to preside; and in which Moses, however illustrious and venerable, occupies only the humble station of a servant. Of this happy and highly privileged family, we, my friends, are the honoured members, if we courageously persevere in the profession of that faith which we solemnly declared at our baptism, and in which we gloried, and if we stedfastly adhere to the joyful hope of the gospel and regulate our conduct thereby to the end of life.

⁴ *But Christ.*] This writer uses much address to avoid giving a shock to the prejudices of his countrymen; and there can be little doubt that the epistle was intended for the perusal of the unbelieving as well as the believing Jews, and perhaps chiefly for those who were in a state of suspense, the number of whom was, no doubt, very considerable. He does not mention the obnoxious name of Jesus till ch. ii. 9, after having prepared the way by a sublime description of his character and office; and at the same time connecting his sufferings with the state of glory to which he was advanced in consequence of them, and of their great benefit to mankind. And he never gives him the title of the Messiah till it becomes necessary to his argument to establish his superiority to Moses, and to reconcile the Hebrews to so offensive a doctrine. And even here he carefully avoids introducing any mention of his having been a sufferer. I do not recollect that any of the expositors have noticed the extreme caution with which he connects the names of Jesus and of Christ; though many have remarked his prudence in concealing his own.

⁵ *Over his family:*] that is, God's. Not as a son, over his own house, which Peirce says "is utterly disagreeable to the scope of the context, and spoils the sense." See Griesbach, Newcome, and Sykes.

⁶ *Which family.*] *ὅς* is the reading of the Corbey MS., and marked by Griesbach as of considerable authority. The reading of the received text is, *whose* family.

⁷ *Confidence*] *παρρησίαν*. Mr. Peirce thinks there is an allusion here to the profession made of their faith and hope at baptism, which they expressed with joy and glorying. See iii. 14, x. 22, 23.

⁸ *Firm.*] *βεβαιαν* is wanting in the Syriac version: Peirce says it is exegetical, and gives the translation in the text. See ver. 14, where it occurs again.

SECTION IV.

[Ch. III. *THE rest promised to believers, and into which Jesus introduces his followers, being far superior to that of Canaan, into which Joshua led the Israelites, the writer solemnly warns the Hebrews, from the example of their rebellious ancestors, of the extreme danger of neglecting that state of sabbatism, which Jesus grants to his followers, by which he means their evangelical state.*—Ch. iii. 7—iv. 13.

The writer was aware how revolting the doctrine he had advanced was to the prejudices of his readers: and therefore he immediately enters a caution against the natural effect of such prejudices, by reminding them of the great danger of apostasy from the faith. Their ancestors had forfeited the promised land because they would not give credit to Moses, notwithstanding the miracles to which they had been witnesses in Egypt and the wilderness; and they will sustain a far greater loss, namely, that of all the privileges and blessings of the gospel (which is what he means by *rest*), if they cease to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, after all the evidence which they have had of his divine mission.

1. He introduces from Psalm xcv. an account of the rebellion and punishment of the Israelites in the wilderness, ver. 7—11.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore, as the holy spirit saith¹, To-day, when ye² shall hear his*
 8. *voice, harden not your hearts, as in the bitter provocation³ in the day of*
 9. *that trial in the wilderness, wherewith⁴ your fathers tried me⁵, proved me⁶,*

¹ *The holy spirit saith.*] Perhaps the writer meant nothing more than to say, that a pious writer thus expresses himself in the person and under the character of God. If he meant, as he is usually understood, to assert the inspiration of the Psalmist, it would by no means follow that the Psalmist was actually inspired, because this unknown writer, whose own inspiration is very problematical, affirmed it. The Psalmist himself lays no claim to inspiration; and there is nothing either in the sentiments or the language of that beautiful ode, which an intelligent and pious though uninspired writer might not be very well supposed to have written.

² *When ye.*] See Macknight; and Whitby, who proves this to be the proper sense of *εαν*. Gen. xiii. 8, Job vii. 4, &c.

³ *The bitter provocation.*] *παραπικρασμῷ*. See Macknight. “*exacerbatio*.” Schleusner.

⁴ *Wherewith.*] *οὗ*. “According to the manner of the Greek construction, this word relates to the *τε πειρασμῶν*, *temptation*, rather than to *ερημῷ*, the *wilderness*; and this translation makes the Greek agree exactly with the Hebrew.” Peirce.

and saw my works forty years⁷. Therefore was I grievously offended⁸ Ch. III.
with that generation, and said, Their hearts are always wandering, and Ver. 10.
they consider⁹ not my ways; so I swear in my anger, They shall not enter
into my rest¹⁰. 11.

There is a passage in the book of Psalms (xcv. 7—11) in which the writer, whether David or some other pious man, animated with a spirit of devotion and zeal, earnestly exhorts his countrymen, in the name and person of God, to obey his voice, and not to resist his will as their ancestors had done in the wilderness. There, though they had seen the wonderful works of God for forty years together, they murmured at his dispensations, and rebelled against his authority, till at last, as the just punishment of their transgressions, the whole generation of those who had grown to maturity when they left Egypt, died in the wilderness before they reached the promised land.

2. He warns the Hebrews against following this evil example, ver. 12.

So likewise¹¹ take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in apostatizing from the living God¹². 12.

The warning addressed by the Psalmist to his contemporaries may with equal justice be addressed to you. After all the mighty works, and the extraordinary scenes, to which you have been witnesses, suffer not your prejudices to gain the ascendancy over your understanding, so as to induce you to reject a doctrine which God has so fully attested, because it contains some truths at the first proposal of which your feelings are disposed to revolt.

⁵ *Tried me.*] “distrusted his power or goodness.” Whitby.

⁶ *Proved me.*] ἐδοκίμασαν. “went about to try and prove him whether he could or would punish sinners; and to provoke and dare him to do his worst.” Pococke ap. Whitby.

⁷ *Saw my works forty years.*] Mr. Peirce supposes that the Hebrew copy which this writer used might agree in its punctuation with his quotation from it.

⁸ *Grievously offended.*] προσωχθισα. So Peirce. “exceedingly displeased.” Macknight. “I was enraged.” Wakefield. See Macknight’s note on ver. 17.

⁹ *They consider not.*] οὐκ ἐγνώσαν. So Wakefield. “They always err, not from ignorance, but from perverseness of disposition, and they have utterly disliked my method of dealing with them.” Macknight. *To know* is a common hebraism for *approve*.

¹⁰ *They shall not enter.*] Gr. *If they shall enter*: q. d. “I am not the true God if, &c.” Newcome. The citation does not entirely agree either with the Hebrew or the LXX., but perhaps the author quoted from memory, or his copy might read differently.

¹¹ *So likewise.*] See Newcome. This verse connects with *δὲ* in the seventh verse.

¹² *The living God.*] “the God who ever lives to punish those who offend.” See Whitby.

Ch. III. 3. He exhorts them to animate each other to zeal and perseverance, ver. 13—15.

Ver. 13. *But exhort one another daily, while it is called "To-day"¹, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of this sin².*

From day to day that proclamation of the Psalmist is addressed to you: "To-day while you hear his voice harden not your hearts." I solemnly charge you to excite each other's serious attention to the important admonition: lest the many plausible pretences which are continually occurring to induce you to desert your profession should unhappily prevail over your better judgement and your Christian resolution.

14. *(For we are made partakers of Christ³, if we retain firm to the end the confidence with which we began⁴.)*

I am the more earnest in exhorting you, and in urging you to exhort one another to perseverance, because it is only by steady practical adherence to those great principles of the Christian doctrine with which you set out in your pious career, that you can attain the reward promised in the gospel and share in your master's triumph. Therefore exhort each other,

15. *While it is said⁵, To-day when you shall hear his voice, harden not your heart as in that bitter provocation.*

Hearken to the solemn admonition while it is continued, and comply with it before it be too late. Be warned by the sad example of your rebellious forefathers.

4. He argues the extreme danger of apostasy from the case of the Israelites in the wilderness, ver. 16—iv. 1.

¹ *While it is called "To-day."*] *αχρις ε το σημερον καλειται* i. e. "as long as you can use this expression, that is, every day." Sykes. Mr. Peirce proposes putting ver. 14 in a parenthesis, resuming the sentence ver. 15, with a little alteration in the construction, not unlike the manner of Paul. See Gal. iii. 4—10. See Peirce and Bowyer.

² *This sin:]* i. e. the sin of apostasy and unbelief, which has many plausible pretences to offer in its own behalf. See Grotius *in loc.*

³ *Partakers of Christ.]* "partakers of the benefit of Christ's office." Peirce. "the blessings of Christ's house." Macknight. "sharers with others of the doctrine or the benefits." Sykes.

⁴ *The confidence with which we began.]* "the begun confidence; literally, the beginning of the confidence. Perseverance in faith and obedience is requisite to your enjoying the privileges of Christ's house." Macknight. "*υποστας*, confidence, is used in the Old Testament for hope or expectation. Ruth i. 12, Ezek. xix. 5; here it is used for that hope which is grounded upon Jesus Christ." Sykes. See ver. 6.

⁵ *While it is said, &c.]* "If ver. 14 be read as a parenthesis, then *εν τω λεγεσθαι* will be resuming what he said ver. 13, 'Exhort one another whilst you are saying, or can say, To-day,' &c. See Ps. xli. 3. 10." Sykes.

For who when they heard did bitterly provoke? Yea, did not all they who came out of Egypt under Moses⁶? Ch. III.
Ver. 16.

Can you flatter yourselves that the numbers of those who apostatize will secure impunity to each? But was this any security to your rebellious ancestors? Who were the persons that provoked God with their murmurs when they heard the report of the spies? Was it a small proportion of the people only? Or was it not rather the whole congregation of Israel whom Moses had conducted out of Egypt, with the exception of two individuals only, namely, Joshua and Caleb? And yet their numbers did not screen them from punishment. Nor will numbers rescue you.

And with whom was he grievously offended forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose carcasses fell in the desert? 17.

Do not you recollect that the apostates were the persons with whom God was offended; those who, when they left Egypt, professed allegiance to him, but afterwards distrusted him and rebelled against him? And did they not all in the course of forty years perish in the desert? Did any who were guilty escape punishment?

And to whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest, but to those who believed not? 18.

Who were the persons that were excluded from the land of promise? The rebels who refused to obey the voice of God. And why did they refuse? From unbelief: because, though they had been witnesses to the astonishing miracles by which they had been rescued from the land of Egypt, they could not trust the power and the promise of God to settle them in Canaan: and they were so disheartened by cowardly fears at the lying report of the spies, that when ordered to advance they refused to obey.

So we see⁷ that they could not enter in because of their unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you⁸ should fall⁹ short of it. 19.
Ch. IV.
Ver. 1.

⁶ *Did not all, &c.*] See Griesbach *in loc.* "This turn of the sentence better suits the writer's argument, as well as the succeeding clauses. It is ably defended by Whitby." See Pyle; and Bengel in Bowyer. "The common reading is that of Newcome, For some, when they had heard, provoked God: however, not all who came out of Egypt under Moses, viz. Caleb and Joshua." "Accedo Chrysostomo, Theodoreto, et aliis, qui hæc verba interrogative sumunt. τινες γὰρ. γὰρ non est particula rationem reddens, sed interrogatio. Sic igitur coherent ver. 15, 16. Ἀλλ' οὐ, Annon?" Rosenmuller.

⁷ *So we see.*] καὶ βλέπομεν this translation is justified by Dr. Whitby.

⁸ *Any of you.*] He was not anxious for himself, but fearful for them. Some copies of little note read ἡμῶν, us.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 1.

From what has been said, it is evident that distrust of the promise of God, a want of faith in his power and goodness, was the primary cause of the apostasy and destruction of your ancestors in the wilderness. And we are in circumstances similar to theirs. To us likewise a rest is promised. We are invited to participate in all the glorious privileges of the new dispensation. The condition of this covenant is faith in the appointed messenger of God. Let us then be solicitous, and I do indeed feel the most earnest solicitude on your account, lest any one of you should, in consequence of any unreasonable and inveterate prejudice, renounce your profession and forfeit all your privileges and your hopes.

We have here another instance of this writer's extreme caution, and fear of wounding the prejudices of his countrymen. The rest he alludes to is the privileges of the gospel; which can be obtained upon no other terms than a belief in Jesus as the Messiah. This he obliquely hints at, but does not expressly mention, because he has not yet said what he deems sufficient to reconcile their minds to the doctrine of a suffering Messiah.

5. The writer notes the similarity between the circumstances of the ancient Israelites and the believing Hebrews, both having a promise of rest of which faith was the condition, ver. 2, 3.

2. *For we have received glad tidings¹ as they also did; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in the hearers.*

I have been cautioning you to be upon your guard that you do not forfeit the promised rest: and there is good reason for this caution; for the circumstances of your ancestors and your own present condition are very similar. To them were announced the glad tidings of a land where they should rest after the fatigues and dangers of the wilderness: to us is announced a better rest; the state of light, of peace, and liberty, which the gospel brings. To your unhappy ancestors the promise was of no value, for they gave it no credit. Nor will the promise of the peace of the gospel be of use to us if we will not believe.

⁹ *Should fall.*] δοκῇ ὑστερηκεναι, *should seem to fall*; a common Atticism which does not imply a doubt. See Newcome, Peirce, Wakefield.

¹ *Glad tidings.*] Archbishop Newcome renders the words, "For unto us glad tidings have been proclaimed, as well as unto them." See also Peirce, and Wakefield.

(*For we who are believers² do enter into this rest*) agreeably to what is said, *So I swear in my anger, They shall not enter³ into my rest.* Ch. IV. Ver. 3.

The indispensable condition of obtaining the blessings of the gospel is faith: believers, and only such, are admitted into rest; either that of Canaan or this of the gospel. Unbelievers are excluded from these privileges, just as your ancestors in the wilderness excluded themselves from the promised land, by refusing to believe in Moses speaking by authority from God: which sad consequence of their folly and their crime is represented as provoking God to anger, and inducing him solemnly to declare that they should not enter into Canaan.

6. The rest of which the Psalmist speaks was not the rest of the sabbath, ver. 3—5.

And although the works were finished from the foundation of the world —3.
(*for the scripture⁴ somewhere saith thus concerning the seventh day: And* 4.
God rested on the seventh day from all his works); *yet in this it saith* 5.
again, They shall not enter into my rest.

The rest to which David alludes cannot be the rest of the sabbath; for that day of rest, according to the Mosaic writings, was instituted from the beginning of the world, when God rested from his labours. The patriarchs, therefore, and the Israelites in the wilderness, enjoyed this rest, not excepting even those who, by the righteous judgement of God, were excluded from Canaan. The observation of the Psalmist, therefore, glances at some blessings that were still future.

7. Neither was that rest to which the Psalmist, in the name of God, invites his readers, the rest of Canaan, but something more distant still, even that of which believers are now put into possession, ver. 6—9.

Seeing then⁵ that a promise is left that some are to enter therein, and 6.

² *We who are believers.*] I inclose this clause in a parenthesis, which makes the sense and connexion of the succeeding clause easy and intelligible. Mr. Peirce, in an excellent note, has vindicated at large the interpretation given in the exposition to the clause in the parenthesis.

³ *They shall not enter.*] The form of expression in the original is, "If they shall enter," &c. This was the Hebrew form of taking an oath: viz. God do so to me, and more also, if the head of Elisha shall stand, &c. 2 Kings vi. 31. See the note on ch. iii. 11.

⁴ *For the scripture*] Including the 4th verse in a parenthesis seems to make the writer's meaning more distinct. See Peirce. The argument is, that as the psalmist speaks of a rest from which the Israelites were to be excluded long after the institution of a sabbath, of which institution they had enjoyed the benefit, it is plain that the sabbath was not the rest intended in the psalm.

⁵ *Seeing, then, that a promise is left.*] Peirce contends for this sense of the clause. Upon the

- Ch. IV. seeing that they to whom the glad tidings were first proclaimed did not
 Ver. 7. enter in, because of unbelief; moreover, seeing that he marketh out a certain
 day, saying by David so long afterwards, To-day, as the expression is, To-
 8. day, when ye shall hear his voice, harden not your heart. (But if Joshua
 had introduced them into that rest, God would not afterwards have spoken
 9. of another day.) Therefore there remaineth a sabbath rest¹ for the people
 of God.

If you consider the case calmly, and reason upon it consistently, you must allow that the rest to which David alludes can be no other than that happy state of peace and privilege which we enjoy under the dispensation of the Messiah.

The Psalmist calls upon his countrymen to attend to the voice of God, that is, the voice of promise, similar to the promise made to their ancestors; this promise still remains to be accomplished, and it shall be fulfilled. It remains,—for the deluded wretches to whom it was first made believed it not, and forfeited its blessings. And many ages afterwards God by the Psalmist renews his promise; and in the time of David, the Israelites are invited, even then, to attend to the promise of God. Also, though the Hebrew nation under Joshua took possession of Canaan, yet even after this there is a promise of rest which would not have been made if the possession of Canaan had been the sole object of the promise. Since, therefore, a rest is promised which is neither the rest of the sabbath nor that of Canaan, but is predicted even in the time of David as a future blessing, it can be no other than the gospel dispensation. This is that delightful sabbath of which the believers in Jesus, who are now the chosen people of God, are invited to partake.

authority of Dr. Macknight, I adopt this construction of the paragraph, though with some diffidence, and take ver. 9 as the conclusion from ver. 6, 7, including ver. 8 in a parenthesis. This seems to me to make the easiest sense. But Mr. Peirce doubts whether *απα*, ver. 9, can be the proper redditive for *επει*, ver. 6; *ει* being the more usual antecedent. Also, ver. 7, *παλιν* ought to have *και* prefixed to it, if there are two distinct arguments. According to Peirce, the train of argument stands thus: Since some are to enter in, and the first did not possess it, therefore he by David fixes another day for seeking an entrance, &c.; plainly showing that the rest alluded to was different both from the sabbath and from Canaan, and therefore he concludes, ver. 9, that this rest is still in reserve, &c.

¹ *A sabbath-rest.*] *σαββατισμος*. This is the free and happy state which believers enjoy under the gospel: it is a perpetual sabbath. The writer no doubt means to insinuate the great superiority of the state of believers in Christ to that of the Jews in Canaan, of the Christian leader to Joshua, and of the Christian sabbath, which extends through every day in the week, to that of Moses, which was limited to one day in seven.—“*Ad hujus quietis participationem perducet nos resurrectionis dies. Interim et in hac vita est ejus gustus aliquis, tum in pace conscientiae, tum in libertate a ritibus judaicis.*” Grotius.

We may here remark, 1. This is a specimen of that loose species of reasoning from the scriptures of the Old Testament, which was common among the Jews at the time when this epistle was written, and the conclusions from which are, to say the least, very precarious.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 9.

2. The state of things under the gospel dispensation is, by this writer, called a sabbatism, or sabbath rest. It was a rest from the yoke of ceremonial institutions, as well as a release from the bondage of ignorance, idolatry, and vice, and from the condemning sentence of the law. This way of representing the privileges and the blessedness of Christianity was adopted by the earliest Christian writers². The happy state into which believers are introduced is by them represented as a sabbath; and under the Christian law they acknowledge no other sabbath but that of an habitual rest from all wickedness, and the habitual practice of all virtue: and therefore the Christian sabbath is not limited to any particular day; but the whole life of a true Christian is a perpetual sabbath, wholly consecrated to God.

8. The writer urges the Hebrew Christians to an earnest solicitude for the attainment of this rest, ver. 10, 11.

*Moreover, he who entereth into God's rest, hath rested also from his own works, as God did from his*³.

10.

He who, by faith in the Messiah, has actually become a partaker of the privileges of the gospel, rests, like God, from his former works: he divests himself of all his former prejudices, and gives up all his superstitious, idolatrous, and vicious practices, that he may lead a holy and new life, becoming the state into which he is introduced.

*Let us earnestly endeavour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any one fall after the same example of unbelief*⁴.

11.

² *The earliest Christian writers.*] Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, represents the Christian dispensation as a perpetual sabbath. "The new law," says he in his argument with the Jew, "will have you keep a perpetual sabbath; and you, when you have passed one day in idleness, think you are religious, not knowing what was commanded you. The Lord our God is not pleased with such things as these. If any among us is guilty of perjury or fraud, let him cease from these crimes; if he is an adulterer, let him repent; and he will have kept the kind of sabbath truly pleasing to God." Just. Martyr's *Dial. Tryph.* p. 229, ed. Par.

³ *He who entereth, &c.*] The writer speaks of Christians as having already entered into God's rest; this expression, therefore, cannot mean the happiness of a future life, but the peace and liberty of the gospel state. And the works from which they rest are the superstitions, idolatries and vices of their unconverted state. "*Utitur hic scriptor verbo ἀρεσκ, non tantum quia futurum illud certissimum est, verum etiam quia in hac ipsa vita, ut jam diximus, quidam ejus quietis gustus datur.*" Grotius.

⁴ *The same example of unbelief.*] Refusing to believe in Moses forfeited the land of Ca-

Ch. IV.
Ver. 11.

Take great pains to surmount your prejudices, and to establish your faith in Jesus as the Messiah, how revolting soever to your feelings, recollecting the crime and punishment of your ancestors, and entertaining an habitual fear, lest being chargeable with a similar offence any one of you should fall into a similar condemnation.

9. He concludes this digression with the remark that the gospel produces a thorough change in those who cordially embrace it, and that the hypocritical professors of religion shall not escape with impunity, ver. 12, 13.

12. *For the word of God¹ is living² and powerful³, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit⁴, and of the joints and marrow⁵, and is a discerner of the thoughts and*
 13. *intentions of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest before it: but all things are naked and open⁶ to the eyes of him with whom we have to do⁷.*

naan, and not believing that Jesus is the Christ excludes from all the benefits of the Christian covenant. Much, I think, of the beauty of this passage is lost, and much of the pertinence of the writer's observations and reasonings is overlooked, in consequence of the rest of which he speaks, being almost universally understood of the happiness of a future life, instead of the state of relief and liberty under the dispensation of the Messiah, which I have little doubt was the idea which was uppermost in the author's mind. Grotius is the only commentator who seems to have glanced at this interpretation. See his note upon ver. 9, 10. It appears, however, by the following extract from Rosenmuller, that the interpretation here proposed has been adopted by some modern theologians in Germany, and particularly by the celebrated Griesbach.—“*Ven. tamen Griesbachius in Progr. 1792 scripto, eorum sententiam probat, qui αναπανσεως nomine indicari volunt, cessationem ab operibus Mosaicae legis: quietem ac liberationem a jugo cervicibus Judæorum imposito, quod neque patres eorum nec ipsi ferre poterant, Act. xv. 10. quod vero excutiunt, qui aures suas dant Christo blande compellanti ad me venite, &c. Matt. xi. 28—30.*”

¹ *Word of God.*] “The word uttered by Christian teachers and prophets in that age of divine illumination. See ver. 2, ch. ii. 2, vi. 5.” Newcome.

² *Living.*] “full of life, of spirit, and animation. 1 Pet. i. 3.” Newcome.

³ *Powerful.*] “Efficacious in converting mankind, in teaching, exhorting, and comforting them when converted. 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 1 Thess. ii. 13.” Newcome.

⁴ *Soul and spirit.*] An allusion to the philosophical but groundless notion, that man consists of three parts, *body*, *soul*, and *spirit*. 1 Thess. v. “The gospel influences the passions by the most affecting motives, and convinces the reason by the most powerful arguments: it pervades the inmost recesses of the human mind.” Newcome.

⁵ *Joints and marrow.*] “This seems to allude to the dividing into its several parts the carcases of the beasts that were sacrificed. But the word or power of God can penetrate further than the knife of the priest, even to the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Dr. Priestley.

⁶ *Open.*] τετραχληλισμενα—ἀτραχηλος, collum: τραχληλίζειν est retorquere, reflectere alicujus collum. Hic facies sursum vertitur, fit igitur conspicua, magis venit in conspectum. Dr. Sykes thinks that the allusion is “to the custom of skinning a beast quite to the neck, and at last skinning neck and all; whence the word comes to signify quite open, made open to every part: q. d. as is the meat in a market after it is skinned and laid open, and we can look upon it and examine it perfectly.” See Newcome.

The gospel of Jesus, which is the doctrine of God, is a living operative principle; where it is duly received, it penetrates the heart and separates what has been long most intimately united. It divides the Jew from his prejudices, the gentile from his superstitions, and the sinner from his crimes: and entering as it were into the recesses of the mind, for it sees every thing in every person, it speaks peace to the humble and the upright.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 13.

Nor can the hypocritical professor escape its notice and its just rebuke. If unbelief lies at the bottom of the heart, whatever be the profession of the lips, the word of God discovers it there, and passes a just sentence of exclusion from all the benefits of the gospel. And this sentence shall be ratified by that Being whose word it is, who knoweth all things, who is the author of our existence and the disposer of our lot, and whose omnipotence shall fulfill all the purposes of his wisdom, and the declarations of his will.

SECTION V.

THE WRITER argues the superior dignity of the priesthood of Christ to that of Aaron. Heb. iv. 14—vii.

Before we enter upon the discussion concerning the priesthood of Christ, it may be proper to remark, that many lay an unwarrantable stress upon this writer's figurative language, and suppose some great mystery to be involved in the priesthood of Christ; whereas, in truth, no greater mystery is contained in comparing Christ to a high-priest, than in comparing him to a shepherd or a householder. In order to enter thoroughly into the meaning and spirit of this writer, we must keep in mind that he has two objects in

⁷ *Of him with whom we have to do.*] *προς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος.* “*coram illo verbo de quo nunc agimus.*” Grotius. “of God the inspirer of this word.” Newcome. “concerning whom we are speaking; or, with whom we have to do; or, to whom we must give account.” Sykes.

Crellius remarks, that some understand *the word of God* as expressive of the person of Christ, and others, of the doctrine of his gospel; with neither of which the description well agrees. He adds: “*Quocirca per sermonem istum Dei intelligenda sunt Dei decreta, quibus incredulos, et contumaces, interitui et suppliciis destinat: cujus generis est illud ipsum Dei juramentum, quo patres illos, et in illis omnes eorum similes, a sua requiete excludere constituit:*” *q. d.* Endeavour to enter into rest; for the word of God, which excludes unbelievers, cannot be imposed upon, cannot be eluded, and will certainly fulfill its purpose in the punishment of the guilty. “*Verum est quod Deus minatur et promittit—Minæ Dei gravissime animam vulnerant, et tristissimos habent effectus—comminationes Dei etiam ad cogitata nostra pertinent. Minis Dei tribuitur quod proprie Dei est.*” Rosenmuller, similar to Crellius.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 14.

view. The first is, to abate the exorbitant attachment of the Hebrew Christians to their ceremonial institute; and the second, to reconcile their minds to that most obnoxious of all doctrines, a suffering Messiah. To accomplish this design, he represents, in a variety of ways suited to their capacities and views, the superiority of the Christian dispensation to that of Moses, even in those particulars which they regarded as the most glorious distinction of their own ritual. Amongst other things, they gloried in the splendour and magnificence of the Levitical priesthood: to meet which prejudice, he reminds them, that the Messiah is predicted under the character of a high-priest of an order superior to that of Aaron¹. And as every priest must offer a sacrifice, so this great high-priest offered himself to God, a victim of far greater value than any of the sacrifices under the law: and by this figurative representation he endeavours to soften the minds of his prejudiced countrymen. This allusion he illustrates by a variety of arguments and quotations from the Jewish scriptures, some of which are indeed of little intrinsic value, but which were well adapted to the conceptions of his readers, and to their peculiar habits of thinking and reasoning.

In the prosecution of his subject this writer, First, describes the character of Jesus and his qualifications for the priestly office, and asserts his divine designation thereto: ch. iv. 14—v. 10. Secondly, he introduces a pertinent digression concerning the importance and difficulty of the subject, and the great danger of apostasy: ch. v. 11—vi. Thirdly, he demonstrates at large that Christ, as a priest after the order of Melchisedec, is greatly superior in dignity to Aaron and his descendants: ch. vii.

I.

The writer describes the character of Jesus, asserts his qualifications for the priestly office, and vindicates his claim to a divine appointment. Ch. iv. 14—v. 10.

1. The character of Jesus as a high-priest is an encouragement to perseverance and to hope, ver. 14—16.

¹ *Superior to that of Aaron.*] “Let us come, saith he, to God’s throne of grace with freedom, as having there such a high-priest in whom are all things by way of excellency to be found for which the Levitical priesthood was ordained and repaired to, as having, 1. A better priesthood, viz. after the order of Melchisedec, ch. vii.; 2. A better consecration, viz. by an oath; 3. A better tabernacle in which he ministers; 4. A better sacrifice offered there; 5. A better covenant established in his blood.” Whitby. See Dr. Priestley’s excellent note.

Having therefore a great high-priest², who is passed into the heavens³, Jesus the son of God⁴, let us hold fast our profession. Ch. IV. Ver. 14.

Having already stated the superiority of Jesus, the Messiah, to Moses our celebrated lawgiver, and represented the danger of rejecting his claim, however novel and revolting to preconceived opinions, I proceed now to another topic, at which indeed I have already hinted, to illustrate the superior excellency of Jesus in his priestly office: and having already mentioned that this suffering man, who, in his character of Messiah, is the son of God, has assumed the office of a high-priest, and in this capacity is entered not into an earthly sanctuary, but into heaven itself, and into the immediate presence of God in our behalf, let us persevere in the profession of his religion, that we may not lose the benefit of his official interposition.

For we have not a high-priest who cannot sympathize with our infirmities, but one who hath suffered trials⁵ in all respects like ourselves, though without sin⁶. 15.

Our great high-priest, so highly exalted, is nevertheless a man like ourselves, and has in the course of his mission and ministry passed through trials and sufferings similar to ours; yet his faith and fortitude failed not. He now sympathizes with us. We share in his compassion: let us imitate his fortitude, his resolution and his piety.

Let us therefore approach with confidence to the throne of grace⁷, that we may obtain mercy and find favour for seasonable relief⁸. 16.

² *A great high-priest.*] The writer resumes the subject which he had introduced ch. ii. 17, 18, iii. 1, Jesus is a great high-priest, as he was superior to all former prophets and messengers of God: ch. i. See Peirce.

³ *Passed into the heavens.*] “passed through the heavens in order to obtain the highest.” Sykes. The Jewish high-priest entered once a year into the holy of holies, which was the residence of the shechinah. Jesus is here described as having entered into the heavens, or passed through the heavens to the immediate residence of God himself, of whom the cloud of glory on the mercy-seat in the Jewish sanctuary was only a symbol.

⁴ *Jesus the son of God.*] He had before spoken explicitly of Jesus as the Messiah, ch. iii. 6; he here expressly calls him the Son of God, a title appropriated to the Messiah; and who is so called, as appears from the explanation of the word in the New Testament, because he was the first who was raised from the dead to an immortal life. Rom. i. 4, Col. i. 18.

⁵ *Suffered trials.*] πεπειρασμενον. The Clermont and many of the ancient writers read πεπειραμενον, pierced; which is marked by Griesbach as of great authority. “The meaning is, that he was pierced through, or underwent in the severest manner all the evils of life.” Sykes.

⁶ *Without sin:*] i. e. without deserting his post, and apostatizing from his profession; and therefore he can sympathize with, and is a proper example for, others in similar situations. “without falling away from truth, or doing any thing amiss” Sykes.

⁷ *The throne of grace.*] the mercy-seat, our high-priest being already there. See Peirce.

⁸ *Seasonable relief.*] βοηθεια is “help obtained in consequence of crying aloud for it.” Macknight. “that we may find favour to have help whenever it is wanted. Seasonable opportune help, if at any time we should fall into times of persecution,” &c. Sykes.

Ch. IV.
Ver. 16.

As our high-priest is already in the most holy place, we also may take courage to approach the mercy seat, where, in answer to humble supplication, we shall obtain mercy to forgive past transgressions, and all seasonable assistance to carry us through present and future difficulties.

The meaning of the writer, stripped of his figurative language, is this: The resurrection and ascension of Jesus is a clear proof of his divine mission and of his acceptance with God: if his disciples imitate his example of faith, and fortitude, and piety, they likewise shall be accepted, and in answer to their earnest prayers they shall be supplied with all the assistance which is requisite to their ultimate success.

Ch. V.
Ver. 1.

2. The qualifications and duties of a high-priest are described, ver. 1—3.

Now every high-priest taken from among men¹ is appointed in behalf of men in divine services, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins².

You know, my brethren, the official duties of the high-priest: it is his business to take the lead in religious worship, especially upon great occasions; and particularly, to offer both voluntary sacrifices and sin offerings.

2. *Who can be mildly affected³ towards those who err through ignorance⁴,
3. being himself encompassed with infirmity; and for this reason he ought, as for the people, so for himself also, to offer sacrifices for sins⁵.*

The law makes no provision for wilful transgression; but sacrifices are provided to reinstate those who, by ignorance and inadvertency, forfeit the blessings of the Mosaic covenant. It is the high-priest's duty to offer these

¹ Taken from among men.] This implies, that Jesus was taken from among men; that is, that he was properly a man, otherwise the parallel will not hold.

² Sacrifices for sins.] The high-priest's duty was to officiate for the people in presenting before God both free-will offerings as tributes of gratitude, and sin-offerings, particularly on the day of atonement.

³ Mildly affected.] See Newcome. "*μετριοπαθειν, modice affici.*" Budæus. Peirce observes that "the word is borrowed from the Platonists, in opposition to the Stoics. The wise man is moderate in his affections, not destitute of them."

⁴ Those who err through ignorance.] Literally, those who are ignorant and out of the way: a common hendiadys for those who err through ignorance. See Peirce.

⁵ For himself also.] Hence Grotius infers, that Christ must have offered for himself a sacrifice for sin; i. e. that he might be delivered from those sufferings to which he was liable for the sins of mankind; ch. vii. 26, 27. Grotius's notion of Jesus offering a sacrifice for his own sin is certainly right; but the author means by *sin*, not moral evil, but ceremonial impurity. "In this respect," says Dr. Priestley, "he shows that the Hebrew high-priest resembled the Christian; since his offering for himself as well as for the people showed that he was liable to transgression as well as they: the sacrifices that he offered being for sin." But it does not appear to have occurred to Dr. Priestley at the time, that the sacrifices in both cases were offered for ceremonial and involuntary, not for moral offences.

sacrifices ; and being himself liable to these inadvertencies, he will the more readily sympathize with others in the same situation, and be more disposed to offer sacrifices for others, being himself in need of a similar purification. How far this analogy holds, and the great comparative superiority of the Christian high-priest, will hereafter be explained.

Ch. V.
Ver. 3.

3. The writer vindicates the divine designation of Jesus to this high office, ver. 4—6.

And as no one taketh this honour to himself, but he who is called by God as Aaron was, so also Christ did not assume to himself the honour of being made a high-priest, but he conferred the office upon him who said to him, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee⁶ : as he saith also in another psalm, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.

4.

5.

6.

A divine appointment is essential to the validity of the priesthood. We all know that Aaron was constituted the high-priest by immediate direction from God, and the priesthood was made hereditary in his family. Jesus also is divinely appointed to a similar office. Nor would he have presumed to have arrogated this honour without a divine designation to it. And that he is so appointed is evident : for I have already established the important fact that Jesus is the true Messiah. And of the Messiah God saith in the second psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee : in allusion, as I have before observed, to his resurrection from the dead. But of the same distinguished personage it is also said in another psalm, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. I shall therefore, in the subsequent discourse, assume it as the principle and ground of my argumentation, that Jesus is, by divine appointment, a high-priest of this rank and description.

4. Jesus was qualified for his office by the discipline of sufferings, ver. 7—10.

He, in the days of his flesh, having offered prayers and supplications with

7.

⁶ *This day, &c.]* Hence Whitby, Peirce, and others, infer that Jesus did not enter upon his priestly office till after his resurrection ; which Doddridge and others vehemently oppose. But the controversy appears to me to be as trivial as it would be to dispute when he entered upon the office of a shepherd. These learned writers do not appear to have sufficiently adverted to the fact, that the author of this epistle strains the allegory of Christ's priestly office merely to accommodate himself to the prejudices of the Hebrew Christians.

- Ch. V. *strong crying*¹ *and tears to him who was able to deliver him from death, and*
 Ver. 8. *having been delivered from his terror*², *though he were a son, learned obedience*
 9. *by his sufferings; and having been made perfect*³, *he became the author of*
 10. *eternal salvation*⁴ *to all that obey him; having been addressed by God*⁵ *as*
a high-priest according to the order of Melchisedec.

This Jesus, who is now our great high-priest, was once a sufferer, and by his sufferings was disciplined to obedience and to sympathy. During his personal ministry, and especially as it drew near to a close, having a clear and distinct foresight of the indignities to which he was to be exposed, and the cruel sufferings he was to endure, the exquisite sensibility of his mind was for a season overpowered, and he earnestly and repeatedly implored of his heavenly father that if possible the bitter cup might pass from him; but he tempered his desires and his distressing apprehensions with the humblest and most dutiful resignation to the will of God: Nevertheless, if it may not pass from me, thy will be done. And you cannot fail to recollect, that though his heavenly Father did not grant the direct object of the petition, the crucifixion of the Messiah being an essential part of the wise plan of providence, yet he bestowed what was a full equivalent. He calmed all his painful apprehensions, and infused that fortitude and dignity of spirit which so eminently distinguished the closing scenes of his life. Thus, though the son of God, the true Messiah, his mind, like that of other men, needed the discipline of suffering to form it to a proper temper both of resignation and of

¹ *With strong crying.*] Referring to his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, related by three of the evangelists.

² *From his terror.*] εἰσακκοῖσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαΐας. Dr. Whitby has fully justified this translation in his excellent note upon this text. That εἰσακκοῖσθαι signifies *deliverance* in answer to prayer, is evident from Ps. xxii. 21, xxxiv. 6, lv. 2; and that εὐλαΐα signifies *fear* in general, is clear from Josh. xxii. 24, Heb. xii. 28, xi. 7, Acts xxiii. 10. Our Lord was not delivered from those sufferings which were the objects of his dread, but from that distress of mind which would have prevented him from passing through them with becoming dignity and fortitude. And the history of his sufferings shows, that after the paroxysm of terror and agony in the garden, the whole of his behaviour through every stage of his succeeding unparalleled sufferings, was calm, collected, and heroic, in the highest degree. “*in hoc exauditus, fuit ut ab isto metu liberaretur.*” Grotius.

³ *Made perfect.*] Τελειωθεὶς seems here to mean nothing more than his being in consequence of his sufferings perfectly qualified for the office of high-priest. “*consummato opere.*” Grotius.

⁴ *Author of eternal salvation.*] Having taught the doctrine, and being himself an example of the fact; having led the way to eternal life.

⁵ *Addressed by God.*] προσαγορευθεὶς. In Psalm cx. God is the speaker, and he addresses the Messiah as a high-priest after the order of Melchisedec. This is the circumstance to which the writer alludes. Macknight renders the words, “being saluted by God.” “something more than called: just as a man is saluted or proclaimed emperor.” Sykes.

tender pity, such as I have before described to be essential qualifications of a high-priest: and being thus eminently qualified for his office, he was at the proper season invested with it, and became the pattern and the guide of his obedient disciples to everlasting life; having long before been announced by God himself in the language of prophecy as a high-priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Ch. V.
Ver. 10.

II.

The writer now introduces a pertinent digression concerning the importance and difficulty of the subject upon which he is about to discourse, and the danger of apostasy; expressing at the same time his good hopes concerning the believing Hebrews, and earnestly exhorting and encouraging them to persevere in their Christian profession. Ch. v. 11—vi. 20.

A former digression was introduced (ch. iii. 7), by way of caution to the believing Hebrews, immediately after the writer had announced the very offensive doctrine, that Jesus, the crucified man, was the true Messiah and superior to Moses. The present digression is introduced upon a similar occasion, and for a similar purpose, now that he is about to establish the equally obnoxious fact, that the priesthood of Jesus, after the order of Melchisedec, is appointed to supersede the Levitical priesthood, and with it the whole of that institute, of which their ministration constituted an essential part, in order to make way for a new and a superior dispensation. He previously warns them, therefore, of the great danger of apostasy from the Christian faith, how offensive soever the doctrines of the Christian religion may be to their feelings and prepossessions.

1. He informs them that he has much to advance concerning the analogy between the priesthood of Jesus and that of Melchisedec, which, however, he is apprehensive that they will hardly be able to understand, ver. 11—14.

*Concerning whom we have much to say, and difficult to be explained, to you who are dull of apprehension*⁶.

11.

There is a spiritual and mystical sense in the history of Melchisedec which I am desirous of opening to you; but your plain unlettered understandings have been so much used to take the story in its literal sense, that I fear I shall hardly be able to make you comprehend its figurative meaning.

⁶ *Dull of apprehension.*] “dull of hearing.” Wakefield. “remiss, careless; that has little or no desire to hear or learn.” Sykes.

Ch. V.
Ver. 12.

For whereas by this time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need on the contrary¹ to be taught yourselves the first elements² of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk³, and not of strong food.

I am very apprehensive that instead of improving you are gone backward in religious knowledge; that instead of being qualified to be teachers of others, as might reasonably have been expected from the date of your conversion, you have forgotten some of the first principles of the Christian doctrine; and that you are really returned to the state of infants in understanding, who can apprehend only the easiest and the plainest principles; instead of having grown up to manly sense, capable of relishing and digesting strong and wholesome though unpalatable truths.

13. *For every one who partaketh of milk only, is unskilled in the doctrine*
14. *of justification⁴, for he is but an infant: but strong food belongeth to full grown men, who by habit have their senses exercised to the discernment both of good and evil.*

They who are satisfied with simple and obvious interpretations of scripture are not well skilled in the doctrine of Christ, the belief of which brings

¹ *On the contrary.*] παλιν. So Wakefield. "ye have again need that some one should teach you." Gronovius, Peirce, Bowyer.

² *The first elements.*] τα στοιχεια της αρχης, "the very elements." Sykes. Whitby remarks, that all the ancient commentators understand by first principles "the humanity of Christ; because the preachers of the gospel spake of that only to them who were not yet perfect in the faith." A memorable concession, not much to the credit of the doctrines so suppressed. He refers to Theodoret, whose words he quotes; to Chrysostom, to Œcumenius, Theophylact, and Irenæus.

³ *Ye have need of milk, &c.*] "you are to be taught the first principles of revelation, instead of being taught what concerns the office of Christ, and what you are to suffer or go through for his name's sake. Not that the apostle would have some doctrines taught to some, and other doctrines taught to others; or some doctrines concealed, while others only are to be taught; but as Christians are able to improve in the knowledge of the oracles of God, so they were to go on to perfection." Sykes.

I am inclined to believe, that as the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament was at that time much in fashion, they who found out a sense the most remote from the true and primary signification of the words were considered as the most learned, they were men in understanding who relished strong meat, while they who understood and approved only the primary and literal meaning were babes who were fed and pleased with milk. This writer who was no apostle, and who appears to be well satisfied with his own skill in figurative interpretation, speaks disparagingly of the Hebrew converts, because of their want of skill in this sort of learning, and their disrelish to it.

⁴ *Justification.*] This is a phrase which often occurs in the epistles of Paul, particularly in those to the Romans and the Galatians. It signifies a covenant or privileged state: that state which the Jews had forfeited by their violations of the Mosaic law, and into which Jews and Gentiles were now introduced by faith in the gospel independently of all ritual institutions. Rom. iii. 21 to the end. The use of this expression, so common in the writings of Paul, though it will not of itself prove that the apostle was himself the author of the epistle, may be considered as a presumption that the writer, whoever he might be, was at least a companion of the apostle, and familiar with his style and manner.

us into a state of privilege and covenant with God. But they who see into the mystical sense of the Old Testament are men of understanding, capable of judging of the force of an argument, and of distinguishing between right and wrong.

Ch. V.
Ver. 14.

Upon this singular paragraph it may be remarked,

1. That it is plain that by the things *hard to be understood* the writer means the allegorical turn which he gives in the following discourse to the history of Melchisedec.

2. That he censures, in language bordering upon severity, the ignorance of the Hebrews with respect to the allegorical meaning of the Old Testament. This was a favourite method of interpretation in the age in which this author wrote, and for that reason he is the more excusable, it being the error, not of himself in particular, but of the age in which he lived. The same method of interpreting the writings of the New Testament was very early introduced into the Christian church; so that plain Christians, who contented themselves with understanding plain language in its obvious sense, were regarded with contempt⁵ as simple ignorant people; and by these means the tenets of a false philosophy were early engrafted upon Christianity, which, when they could not be supported by the obvious sense of the scriptures, were pretended to be proved by the mystical interpretation.

I cannot therefore agree with the author of this epistle in the censure which he passes upon the believing Hebrews; for I do not conceive that a mystical interpretation of a plain historical narrative is either a judicious or an useful way of interpreting the scriptures either of the Old Testament or the New.

2. Notwithstanding his apprehension that they may not thoroughly comprehend his meaning, he nevertheless proceeds to advance the doctrine to which he alludes, ch. vi. 1—3.

Wherefore, dismissing⁶ the first principles of the doctrine of Christ⁷, let us

Ch. VI.
Ver. 1.

⁵ *Contempt.*] Vid. Eusebius's *Eccl. History*; where Papias, a venerable man, contemporary with the apostles, is treated with contempt for his attachment to the literal interpretation; and Origen is highly commended for his early inquiries into the mystical sense of the scriptures. *Euseb. lib. iii. c. 31.*

⁶ *Wherefore, dismissing.*] "Since, considering the time, ye ought to understand higher doctrines:" ch. v. 12. Newcome. See also Peirce.

⁷ *The principles of the doctrine of Christ.*] "τον της αρχης τε Χριστου λογον, by a hypallage, for την τε λογον τε Χριστου αρχην, which seem to carry the same sense as the first elements of

- Ch. VI. *advance*¹ *towards perfection (not laying again the foundation*² *of repentance*
 Ver. 2. *from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms,*
and of the imposition of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of
 3. *the everlasting judgement): and this let us do*³ *if God permit.*

Since therefore all of you ought to be well informed in the doctrine of Christ, and some of you, I trust, are so, I shall cease to insist upon those fundamental articles of the Christian faith which are familiar to you, and with divine permission I shall proceed to instruct you in those points which are better adapted to the manly age of Christian discipline, and shall lay open to you the hidden meaning of the Old Testament scriptures, that you may clearly discern the analogy which subsists between the old dispensation and the new, and the decided superiority of the latter.

The writer still alludes to his proposed mystical interpretations, which he calls meat for strong men, as distinguished from the great first principles of Christianity, which he represents as milk for babes. Of these principles he has here given a distinct enumeration, which, having been drawn up by an apostolical man in the apostolic age, may be justly regarded as the only genuine apostles' creed, differing indeed in many articles from the ancient symbol which now bears that venerable name, and much more from those

the oracles of God: ch. v. 12." Owen *apud* Bowyer. "let us leave discoursing on the principles of the doctrine of Christ." Newcome.

¹ *Let us advance.*] "I go on to offer you something more solid and fit for you as adult persons." Peirce; who observes that "the writer seems to have had an eye to what he had said in the last verse of the foregoing chapter." Eph. iv. 11—15; Col. i. 28.

² *The foundation.*] Mr. Peirce considers the Old Testament as a more obscure representation of Christ, and that the Jewish religion contained a rough draught, or imperfect rudiments, of Christianity; the insisting upon which, after the meaning of them had been set in so clear a light by the coming of Christ, is waved by the author. He explains, therefore, all the articles here enumerated as expressive of something under the Jewish dispensation. But the fact is, that the author takes great pains to explain the allusions of the Old Testament, whether real or imaginary: these he calls the strong meat for men advanced to maturity; whereas he insists but little upon the obvious principles of Christianity, which, though of the highest importance in themselves, were level to every capacity, and which he calls "milk for babes." These, therefore, appear to me, as to the generality of expositors, to be the true sense of the articles here specified. Dr. Macknight adopts Mr. Peirce's interpretation.

"Fundamental doctrines," says Dr. Sykes, "were not in those early days the same as they grew to be in ages of contention, when Christianity came to be a matter of abstruse, metaphysical, unintelligible jargon, involved in thick darkness and covered with mystery; but men were taught the easy and plain doctrines of faith in one God, the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his son our Lord, and repentance from dead works, and the meaning of laying on of hands, and of baptism, and a resurrection, and a future judgement."

³ *Let us do.*] "Include in a parenthesis, from *not laying again*, ver. 1, to *judgement*, ver. 2. And ver. 3 we should read *ποιησωμεν* as *φερωμεθα*, ver. 1." Markland *ap.* Bowyer. See Griesbach.

masses of absurdity, which the ignorance and arrogance of those who have usurped the authority of Christ in succeeding ages, have presumed to impose upon the ignorance and credulity of the Christian world. Ch. VI.
Ver. 3.

(1) The first of these fundamental articles is "repentance from dead works⁴," that is a change of mind with respect to the importance of those ceremonial practices which the Mosaic institute imposed, and upon the breach of which the law inexorably pronounced sentence of death. These rites, upon which the Hebrews once laid so mighty a stress, and in which they once placed their chief confidence, were given up as of no use, and exchanged for the milder requisitions of the gospel.

(2.) "Faith towards God," believing the record that God has given of his son, 1 John, v. 11, and admitting the mission and doctrine of Jesus upon the authority of his divine credentials.

(3.) "The doctrine of baptisms⁵," the baptism of water, by which they who embraced the Christian religion publicly professed their faith in Christ, and the baptism of the holy spirit, by which that faith was ratified and confirmed.

(4.) "The imposition of hands⁶," which was a rite practised in the apostolic age as a token of the effusion of the holy spirit, and also as a solemn designation to the office of an elder or an evangelist, where no supernatural powers were pretended to be communicated.

(5.) "The resurrection of the dead⁷" is justly introduced as a fundamental

⁴ *Repentance from dead works.*] "works which lead to death, or works wrought by those who are dead in sins. See 1 Tim. v. 6." Newcome. Dr. Sykes observes, that "*dead works* are no where mentioned but in this epistle, and that they are such as lead to death, such as God will punish with death." But the writer seems rather to mean a *change of mind* (*μετανοια*) with regard to ritual impositions. The Hebrews laid too much stress upon the works of the law; the gospel requires that they should build their hopes upon faith in Christ, which brings forth fruit unto holiness, the end of which is everlasting life. Whereas, by the works of the law no flesh living can be justified. The law leaves its votaries under a sentence of death: the works of the law, therefore, may justly be called dead works: and the first principle in which the converted Jew was instructed, was to renounce the hope of justification by the law; he was taught repentance from dead works. *μετανοια* is used in the same sense ch. xii. 17.

⁵ *Baptisms.*] "that is, Christian baptism; the plural for the singular superlative. Compare Eph. iv. 5." Simpson's *Notes on Scripture*.—"βαπτισμοι est baptismus qui in plures homines confertur." Rosenmuller.

⁶ *Imposition of hands.*] viz. "the use and purport of this practice, sometimes to give the holy ghost; sometimes to appoint persons to offices, Acts vi. 6, xiii. 3; sometimes to heal, Acts ix. 12, 17." Sykes.

⁷ *Resurrection of the dead.*] This is a doctrine not taught in the Old Testament, though a future life was probably expected by the pious Jews, and after the return from the captivity the Pharisees taught the resurrection. But it was represented as a privilege belonging to the Jews only. See Joseph. *De Bell. Jud.* lib. viii. c. 8, § 14.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 3.

article of the Christian faith, and is with great propriety mentioned to the believing Hebrews, whose views upon this subject, previously to their acquaintance with the Christian doctrine, were very limited and obscure.

6. The most essential doctrine of all is, "the eternal judgement¹," or that awful decision, which assigns both to the righteous and to the wicked their respective portions in the future life: for the Christian revelation most explicitly and positively announces that we shall all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body according to that we have done, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

Such are the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and happy had it been for the Christian world had they been left in the simplicity of this primitive and apostolic representation.

3. The writer solemnly warns his readers of the great danger of apostasy, ver. 4—8.

4. *For it is impossible to renew² those to repentance who have been once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift³, and have been made*
5. *partakers of the holy spirit⁴, and have tasted the excellent word of God⁵,*

¹ *The eternal judgement,*] "the effects of which will continue for ever." Newcome.—Mr. Peirce understands the expression of those tremendous judgements of which the books of Moses give an account, such as Sodom and Gomorrha, Pharaoh and his host, &c.; not thinking it likely that the writer would pass over a doctrine of such consequence. But the writer was far from meaning to represent these doctrines as of no moment; on the contrary, he holds them up as the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, but at the same time so obvious, that all who professed faith in Christ believed and acknowledged them; but he declines to insist upon them at present, it being his design to enlarge upon certain doctrines which, though important, were remote and obscure.

² *For it is impossible to renew,*] *q. d.* "I speak particularly to you who are disposed to go on to perfection. To apostates I have nothing to say. For (*γὰρ*) it is impossible," &c. Owen, see Bowyer. The construction requires that the word corresponding to *ἀνακαινίζειν* should in the translation be placed before the accusatives depending upon it. Macknight, Newcome.—It is *impossible*, because whatever could be said or done to that end had been said or done already. Le Clerc on Hammond, Newcome.

³ *Heavenly gift,*] "the bounty of God bestowed on men through the gospel. John iv. 10, Rom. v. 17." Newcome. "To taste this gift is to perceive, to be sensible of the truth of such gift." Sykes.

⁴ *Made partakers of the holy spirit,*] "If it be imagined that every Christian enjoyed some extraordinary gift of the holy spirit, this is more than can be inferred from this place; for if a person were convinced of the truth of the gospel by a careful study of the scriptures, or by seeing himself, or being fully satisfied of the miraculous powers and assistances of the first preachers of the gospel, he might be properly enough said to be a partaker of the holy ghost. However, if the apostle be thought to speak of such as actually had the gifts of the holy ghost, and yet fell away from Christianity, his reasoning is still stronger, and the unlikelihood of bringing such back to truth still greater." Sykes.

⁵ *Excellent word of God,*] *καλὸν* "the good word of God dictated by the spirit." Newcome.
"the

*and the mighty works of the age that was to come*⁶, *and yet have relapsed*⁷, *since they again crucify to themselves the son of God, and expose him to public infamy*⁸.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 6.

Without dwelling therefore any longer upon these obvious principles, I shall immediately proceed to those more difficult subjects to which I have alluded; for indeed it would be a total loss of time and labour to attempt to reclaim those who have apostatized from the Christian faith in opposition to that commanding evidence which has been exhibited before you, and which effected your conversion to the gospel doctrine. It is indeed a hopeless case, and morally impossible to recover those who have relapsed into their former state of unbelief after having discerned the evidences of Christian truth, and having enjoyed the liberty which the gospel gives; after having even participated in the spiritual gifts, and been convinced by them of the divine authority of the doctrine of Jesus, having not only been witnesses to the stupendous miracles wrought by the first teachers of Christianity, but having themselves been endued with miraculous powers. Persons who resist evidence like this are absolutely irrecoverable, as no stronger evidence will, or can, be produced to overcome their prejudices. Such persons, by their conduct, show that they regard Jesus as an impostor, and that, in their judgement, he deservedly suffered an ignominious death: and corresponding to their principles and their conduct will be their final state.

*For the land*⁹ *which drinketh in the rain that falleth often upon it, and produceth herbage useful to those for whom it is cultivated, receiveth a blessing from God*¹⁰; *but that which beareth thorns and briars, is rejected,*^{7.} *and near to a curse*¹¹; *whose end is to be burned up*¹².^{8.}

“the comfortable and sure word of God, which instructs men how to act with uprightness and honesty in every station and circumstance of life.” Sykes.

⁶ *Mighty works of the age to come.*] “had experience of the extraordinary miracles wrought in this age of the Messiah.” Peirce. To the same purport Newcome, Wakefield, Sykes.—“*experiri, quid religio Christiana efficere possit.*” Rosenmuller.

⁷ *And yet have relapsed.*] παραπεσοντας παλιν, “have fallen away again.” This punctuation is more correct than that which joins παλιν to ανακαινιζειν, where it is redundant. Erasmus, Peirce, Bowyer. Macknight observes that και is here taken in its adversative sense. Also that “our translators have, after Beza, without any authority inserted the word *if* (if they fall away), that the text might not appear to contradict the Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.”

⁸ *Expose him to infamy.*] “By their practice they in effect crucify the son of God, and expose him to infamy. See Matt. i. 19.” Peirce. “They treat him as if they thought he deserved the sentence executed upon him.” Sykes. “*ανασταυρειν idem est quod σταυρειν, nec significat rursus crucifigere.*” Rosenmuller.

⁹ *For the land.*] “These cannot be restored, for (γαρ) as good men resemble fertile ground, these resemble what is barren.” Newcome.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 8.

A fertile soil, which thrives under the cultivator's hand, and is enriched by the rain from heaven, is acceptable and useful to the proprietor, and by further cultivation becomes more abundantly fruitful: and in like manner, they who attend to and improve Christian instruction shall advance in knowledge, virtue and usefulness, and in the favour of God. But as rocky barren land, which resists all the arts of cultivation, and produces nothing but thorns and briars, at length wearies out the patience of the husbandman, and is left by him under the original curse, and for want of water and manure is burned up by the scorching heat of the sun; so shall they, who wilfully stop their ears against the mild and gentle voice of instruction and discipline, be, after sufficient season of trial, abandoned by God and man, and left to suffer the just and awful consequences of their own obstinacy and folly.

4. The writer expresses his good hope concerning the character and state of the Hebrew Christians, founded upon their past conduct, ver. 9, 10.

9. *But, beloved¹, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that belong to salvation, though we thus speak.*

My dear brethren, though I have thought it necessary, in order to put you upon your guard, to represent the great danger of apostasy from the faith, I am very far from intending to insinuate that you are chargeable with this great offence. On the contrary, I entertain the best hopes concerning you, that you still maintain, and will continue to hold fast, that firm faith and that unshaken fidelity, and will persevere in the practice of those evangelical virtues, which will ensure your eternal happiness.

10. *For God is not unjust, so as to forget your active love² which ye have shown to his name³, in having relieved and in still continuing to relieve the saints⁴.*

¹⁰ *Receiveth a blessing from God.*] See Gen. i. 11, xxvii. 27. Wakefield places *απο Θεου* after *ὑετον*, without which he says the passage is absurd. His version is: "the land which drinketh the rain that is often falling upon it from God, and beareth herbage useful to the tillers of it, receiveth praise."

¹¹ *Near to a curse.*] "near being pronounced barren." Newcome. An allusion to the curse, Gen. iii. 17, 18. The writer uses a soft expression, that he might not appear to represent their case as already desperate: they were nigh unto a curse." Peirce.

¹² *Whose end is to be burned up.*] Dr. Macknight observes, that "a principal part of the eastern agriculture consists in leading rills of water from ponds, &c., to render the fields fruitful. When this is neglected, the land is scorched by the heat and drought of the climate."

¹ *But, beloved.*] Mr. Peirce observes, that this softening expression is much in the manner of Paul. See 2 Thess. ii. 13, Eph. iv. 20, Rom. viii. 9.

² *Your active love.*] *τα εργα και της αγαπης*, your work and love: "an hendiadys." Newcome. Griesbach, upon the authority of many copies, drops the words *τα κοπου*.

You have shown your love to God and your regard to his authority, not by empty professions, but by active obedience, and particularly by the kind sympathy which you have manifested, and the seasonable relief which you have afforded, and which you still continue to administer, to afflicted and persecuted Christians: and you have served a just and bountiful master, who will not forget your kindness to his suffering friends, but will regard it as done to himself, and will publicly acknowledge it, and honourably requite you for it another day.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 10.

5. His design is to encourage and stimulate them to Christian perseverance, ver. 11, 12.

But we desire that every one of you would show the same diligence even to the end, in order to the complete consummation⁵ of your hope.

11.

My only design in suggesting these alarming admonitions is to engage every individual among you, without any exception, to persevere in the same active faith and pious duty, and in the same kind and benevolent conduct, to the end of life, and to suffer no consideration whatever to alienate your hearts from your Christian profession, and then you may rest assured that your hopes shall in due time receive their complete accomplishment, and that your highest expectations shall be greatly exceeded.

That ye be not slothful⁶, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises⁷.

12.

³ Shown to his name.] “το ὄνομα Θεοῦ, ipse Deus. Sensus: ex obsequio apud Deum.” Rosenmuller.

⁴ Relieve the saints.] See Wakefield. In what manner they had particularly exerted themselves he describes ch. x. 33, 34.

⁵ The complete consummation.] Connect ἐνδεικνυσθαι with ἀχρι τελος, “show the same diligence to the end.” Bengelius ap. Bowyer. ἐκαστον, we desire not only that many, but that every one of you without exception. See Peirce. “προς την πληροφοριαν της ελπιδος, non est rectitudo, sed impletio, sive consummatio. Col. ii. 2, 1 Thess. i. 5, 2 Tim. iv. 5.” Grotius.—“spes plena.” Rosenmuller. “that your hope may be complete—my hope.” Macknight. “the object of hope, Jesus Christ: that you may acknowledge him to the end of life.” Peirce. Rather joining the construction of Bengel with the interpretation of Peirce: We desire that every one of you would show to the end of life the same diligence in the service of God, that you may ultimately obtain the object, the consummation of your hope, in your everlasting salvation.

⁶ Slothful.] “νωθρος, tardus ad sperandum: qui non facile sperat, sed semper dubitat: proprie, tardus ad ambulandum: pro homine stupido sumitur, ch. v. 11.” Rosenmuller.

⁷ Inherit the promises.] Commonly understood of those who by death are supposed to be advanced to future happiness, and this text is alleged as an argument for the intermediate state. See Doddridge. I think, with Peirce, that the writer alludes to the converted Gentiles, or in general to all who were stedfast in the profession of Christianity. “He means such good Christians as had persevered in their profession of Christ, and were now in possession of what God had promised to Abraham.” Sykes.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 12.

And my desire also is to rouse your exertions in the practice of duty, and to induce you to imitate the bright examples of your brethren in different parts of the world, who, by the exercise of persevering faith in the great doctrines of Christianity, are in actual possession of the privileges promised to the spiritual descendants of Abraham, and joyful expectants of infinitely better blessings in reversion.

6. He reminds them that it was by perseverance in faith that Abraham eventually obtained the promised blessing, ver. 13—15.

13. *Now when God made the promise¹ to Abraham, because he could swear*
 14. *by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Assuredly I will abundantly*
 15. *bless thee, and I will abundantly multiply thee. And thus Abraham hav-*
ing waited patiently obtained the promise².

Our pious ancestor Abraham is an eminent example of that patient perseverance in faith which I recommend to you. God commanded him to quit his native country, and promised him a posterity by Sarah in whom all nations should be blessed: he believed and obeyed. And after Isaac was born, in a season of great trial, when, as the history relates, he had shown a readiness to offer this child of promise upon the altar, as a reward of his unhesitating faith, the supreme Being bound himself by an oath to fulfill every promise he had made to his virtuous and faithful servant: and the faith of the patriarch remaining unshaken under these severe trials, he was in due time rewarded by the accomplishment of the promise; first in his own person, in the gift and preservation of his son; afterwards in a numerous progeny descending from him; and ultimately, in the innumerable multitude of his spiritual descendants, who, being the heirs of his faith, are also co-heirs with him of the divine promise.

7. The promise and the oath of God are the ground of a believer's hope, ver. 16—18.

16. *For men indeed swear by one who is greater, and to them an oath for confirmation is an end of all contradiction³.*

¹ *God made the promise.*] "This alludes to the promise made to Abraham, upon the occasion of his offering up Isaac, Gen. xxii. 15, 16; which was the only time when the promise to this patriarch was confirmed by an oath." Peirce.

² *Obtained the promise.*] "Abraham waited with patience many years ere he could see any posterity from Isaac; but at length what was promised about the increase of his family was made good, and he obtained, not the *promises* but the *promise*, the particular promise of blessing and multiplying him, or enlarging his family: ver. 14." Sykes.

Oaths amongst men are an appeal to God, the searcher of hearts and the judge of all, for the truth of a declaration ; and what a man solemnly avers or promises upon oath is generally believed, and the oath silences all objection. Ch. VI.
Ver. 16.

Wherefore⁴, God being willing very abundantly to manifest to the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, included it in an oath⁵. 17.

Thus God himself, in great condescension to human infirmity, and to our imperfect mode of conception, and in order to impress upon the minds of believers a more deep and affecting sense of the value and of the immutability of his promise, made that promise the subject of an oath ; and swore by his own great and venerable name that he would confer the most important blessings upon the posterity of the believing patriarch, provided that they became the heirs of his faith and expectants of the promises.

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to deceive, we might have strong encouragement⁶, who have fled for refuge⁷ to lay hold on the hope set before us⁸. 18.

³ *An end of contradiction.*] *αντιλογιας*. "That the apostle is here speaking of promissory oaths," says Dr. Whitby, "is evident from the occasion of this discourse, viz. the promise made to Abraham. Now, these oaths being equally conducive to this good end in all ages, we have just reason to believe that Christianity allows of them for these ends." "The thing promised should be unquestionably good and in our power." Peirce.

⁴ *Wherefore.*] *εν ω*. Peirce. "in which view." Wakefield. *i. e. δια τωτο, quam ob causam.*" Rosenmuller.

⁵ *Included it in an oath.*] *εμεσιτευσεν ορκω*. "placed his promise, as it were, in the middle of an oath." Peirce ; which is the sense given by the Syriac version. "*μεσ. intervenire, et speciatim, intervenire jurejurando : interponere jusjurandum.*" Rosenmuller. "interposed an oath." Wakefield. "by an oath." Newcome ; who explains it, "transacted the matter between himself and mankind."

⁶ *We might have strong encouragement.*] It is asked who are we to understand by *we*? Probably, the Hebrew believers only ; for to Abraham and his posterity only was the promise made, which was confirmed by oath. And as the author is only addressing the believing Hebrews, it is not at all necessary to suppose, with Peirce, that he is speaking of Gentile converts only, or, with Sykes and others, that he includes all believers, all who are the spiritual seed of Abraham. The discourse will be more intelligible if the words are restricted to Hebrews only. They were the natural posterity of Abraham ; to them, as such, was that promise made, which was confirmed by an oath ; to them that promise was now fulfilled by the mission of Jesus as the Messiah, and by the new dispensation which he hath introduced, confirmed by the promise and the oath of God : he earnestly exhorts the believing Hebrews to flee for refuge both from the old and worn out dispensation which was just about to be dissolved, ch. viii. 13, and from the danger of unbelief and apostasy, which he had just described, ch. vi. 1—9.

⁷ *Who have fled for refuge.*] as the man-slayer to the city of refuge from the avenger of blood, Numb. xxxv. 6, Josh. xxi. 27. See Grotius. The idea is beautifully illustrated by Dr. Doddridge : "Thither (to the hope of the gospel) let us flee for our lives ; flee, as if we heard the footsteps of the avenger of blood just behind us, and our lives depended upon the speed of the present moment."

⁸ *The hope set before us.*] the new dispensation, the gospel, the foundation of hope. "*κρατησαι, i. e. εις το κρατησαι, qui eo confugimus, ut firmiter teneamus spem nobis propositam, nempe evangelio.*" Rosenmuller. "to lay hold of Christ, who is the hope proposed to us. Hope is here put for the object of hope." Peirce.

Ch. VI.
Ver. 18.

This condescension of God, in ratifying his promise by his oath, is intended for our encouragement and consolation, who are the heirs of this precious promise. For we, lying under a sentence of condemnation by the law, and fleeing from the avenger of blood to the gospel of Jesus, as to a city of refuge, could hardly be induced to think ourselves secure if our feeble wavering hopes were not confirmed and established by the most solemn and explicit declarations of the God of eternal truth: but, relying upon his unchangeable covenant, we now banish every fear.

8. The hope of believers is now fixed upon that state of blessedness of which Jesus is gone to take possession in their name, ver. 19, 20.

19. *Which hope we keep fast as an anchor of the soul both steady and strong, and which also entereth within the veil*¹.

This confidence in the divine promise is an anchor, firm and strong, which will never fail, and which keeps our little bark safe and steady amidst the billows of affliction and persecution: and this hope penetrates within the veil and fixes itself upon the throne of God: the great object of it being a state of eternal peace and happiness in the divine presence.

20. *Whither our forerunner hath entered for us, even Jesus, made a high-priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec*².

And this allusion to the veil of the temple, which separates the holy from the most holy place, brings me back to the subject of my discourse: for into this holy of holies, where God resides, has Jesus our forerunner already entered, as a pattern of the high honour and felicity to which his faithful followers are hereafter to be admitted; and, if I may so express it, to plead their cause and to assert their right in consequence of the gracious promise of God, and even to take possession of it in their name, in order to bestow it hereafter upon his victorious and persevering followers. Thus officiating in the double capacity of a king and a priest, after the example of his prototype Melchisedec.

III.

The writer, returning from his digression, proceeds to state at large that

¹ *Entereth within the veil.*] “ Hope is to the soul in the midst of temptations, what an anchor is to a ship tossed about in the sea; it is a stay upon which we may rely firm and sure; and it is what will lead us to heaven itself, that true Holy of holies which lies within the veil: i. e. that part of the tabernacle which was behind or within the second veil.” Sykes.

² *Order of Melchisedec.*] “ The author returns to his subject from which he had digressed, Ch. v. 11.” Newcome.

the dignity of Jesus, as a priest after the order of Melchisedec, is greatly superior to that of the Levitical priesthood, which institution he is therefore commissioned to supersede. Ch. vii.

Ch. VII.
Ver. 1.

1. He argues the superiority of Melchisedec to Abraham and Levi, ver. 1—10.

We have had repeated occasion to remark, in the course of this epistle, how frequently the writer rests his argument upon the ambiguity of words, and reasons from passages in the Old Testament which, in their primary sense, bear no relation to the subject of his discourse. This mode of reasoning is evidently inconclusive, and in the present enlightened age is altogether discarded; but it was admired and approved in the age when this epistle was written, and was probably well adapted to the crude conceptions and to the inveterate prejudices of the simple and illiterate Hebrews.

The paragraph which we are now about to consider is a remarkable instance of that kind of loose, allegorical, and verbal reasoning to which I allude. The design of the writer is sufficiently obvious; so likewise is the weakness and inconclusiveness of his argument.

But learned expositors having first assumed as a principle, that the epistle is under the impulse of inspiration, and then seeing that the obvious sense of the author is inconsistent with this supposition, have puzzled themselves to invent a meaning less repugnant to their groundless hypothesis: and it is curious to observe the difficulties into which they plunge themselves by their respective systems. Some have thought that the whole history of Melchisedec was an allegory; others have fancied that Melchisedec was the holy ghost, or Jesus Christ in his pre-existent state; or some other celestial spirit, who upon this occasion appeared to Abraham; or, that he was Shem the son of Noah³. Whereas the truth is, that the author has taken a very plain and simple narrative from the Old Testament, and has, by a fanciful comment, strained it to his purpose of proving the superiority of Christ to Aaron, and to the whole order of Levitical priests: and it is far better to acknowledge at once that this mode of reasoning is injudicious and inconclusive, than to expose the evidences of Christianity to the scoffs of unbelievers, by first pleading for the plenary inspiration of the sacred writers,

³ *Shem the son of Noah.*] This was the interpretation of the Jewish rabbis. See Whitby. That very learned and very honest writer enumerates, and thinks it worth his while to confute, these absurd suppositions.

Ch. VII. and then, in order to save their credit, annexing such a meaning to their language as every man of understanding must see to be foreign to the author's design.

Without therefore pretending to justify¹ the author's reasoning, I shall proceed to state that reasoning as it is; but for the better understanding his meaning, I shall first introduce that very brief account of Melchisedec which is contained Gen. xiv. 18—20.

"And Melchisedec, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was priest of the most high God, and he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the most high God who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hands; and Abram gave him tithes of all *the spoils*."

This is all that is said concerning this celebrated person in the Old Testament, except Psalm cx. 4, supposed to be addressed to the Messiah: "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." It is from this account that the author of the epistle draws his parallel.

1. He introduces a parabolical description of this eminent person, ver. 1—3.

- Ver. 1. *For this Melchisedec*², *king of Salem*³, *priest of the most high God,*
2. *who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed*

¹ *Without pretending to justify.*] "Because the allegorical writers of the Jews," says Le Clerc, "at that time accommodated innumerable passages to the Messiah, not relying upon any grammatical interpretations, but a certain old custom of explaining the scripture after this manner, and because they interpreted Psalm cx. of the Messiah, the sacred writer makes use of that interpretation to his purpose: and because they acknowledged the Messiah ought to be like Melchisedec, he reasons against them from their own concessions, not against other men who might have denied what he affirmed. Otherwise, if the thing be considered in itself, no stronger grammatical argument can be drawn against others from that history: and therefore such things are not to be too much urged now, because that way of explaining scripture is gone out of use." See Whitby on Heb. vii. 1.

"In his observations upon this subject," says Dr. Priestley, "we find more of imagination than of judgement: it proceeds, however, upon such an application of the scriptures as the Jews were accustomed to, and laid much stress upon; and therefore would have weight with those to whom he wrote, as I doubt not they had with himself; but this should not prevent our judging for ourselves, and rejecting whatever does not appear to be sufficiently well founded: and there is nothing that is more open to objection than his reasoning concerning Melchisedec."

² *For this Melchisedec.*] Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. "For this Melchisedec resembles Christ in many respects." Newcome. "It does not appear," says Dr. Priestley, "that Melchisedec was more of a priest than Abraham was. He was a petty prince; and in these times all princes were likewise priests of their several tribes, and occasionally offered sacrifices as did Abraham."

³ *King of Salem.*] Probably Jerusalem. See Ps. lxxvi. 2. "Jerom says, that Salem was a village near Scythopolis, where the ruins of Melchisedec's palace were still to be seen." Sykes.

him, to whom even Abraham divided a tenth part of all the spoils, being first by interpretation king of righteousness, and then king of Salem also, which is, king of peace, without recorded father⁴ or mother, and without priestly pedigree, having neither beginning of days nor end of life⁵, but resembling the son of God⁶ remaineth a priest continually.

Ch. VII.
Ver. 3.

Having just remarked that Jesus is a perpetual high-priest after the order of Melchisedec, I proceed now to state more particularly the circumstances of resemblance: and in recurring to the brief history of this distinguished character in the book of Genesis, you may observe that he was both a king and a priest, and that his very name and titles express that he was a righteous and a peaceful prince; he blessed Abraham and received tithes from him; he had no title to his office by descent and pedigree; and as there is no report either of his birth or death, this eminent person, to whom we have compared the son of God, may be figuratively regarded as a living and perpetual priest: at least, as no account is given of any successor to him in office, we may presume that he had none.

2. The writer argues the superiority of Melchisedec to Abraham, ver. 4—7.

Now consider how great this man was⁷, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth part of the spoils.

4.

⁴ Without recorded father.] “Without recorded mother.” Newcome. Elsner Obs. Sac. ver. 2, p. 347, shows that it was usual to apply the words *απατωρ*, *αμητωρ*, to persons whose parents were unknown; and he rightly interprets the text as expressing that the name of Melchisedec was not to be found in the genealogies of the priests. To explain the text as comparing Jesus to Melchisedec, because he had no mother in his divine nature, and no father in his human nature, is unworthy of the good sense of some expositors who have given this interpretation. See Peirce and Doddridge. Mr. Wakefield translates the passage thus: “of whose father, mother, pedigree, birth, and death, there is no account.”

⁵ Neither beginning of days nor end of life.] The priests under the law began their ministrations at thirty years of age, and ended when they were fifty. See Numb. iv. The writer means that there is no recorded limitation of Melchisedec's priesthood. Mr. Peirce would render *αρχην* by *omnino prorsus*, and translates the text thus: “having plainly neither an end of days nor of life.” He argues, that it would not be proper to say, that Melchisedec resembled the Son of God in not having a beginning of the days of his priesthood, because we certainly know when the days of the priesthood of Christ began, viz. at his resurrection. This, however, will not be universally allowed. And it is sufficient for the writer's purpose that Melchisedec had no antecedent and no successor.

⁶ Resembling the Son of God.] The eighth verse is a commentary upon this clause. Nothing is said of Melchisedec's death: therefore we may suppose him alive, that he is still exercising his office, and that no one is to succeed him.

⁷ Consider how great this man was.] The superiority of Melchisedec to Abraham is here inferred from his taking tithes of him. “But though,” says Dr. Priestley in his note upon ver. 1, “Abraham gave Melchisedec a tenth of the spoils which he had recovered from the kings whom he had defeated, it does not appear that he gave it with any religious view, or as any thing which was due to him. It was perhaps to indemnify him for what he had suffered from the incursions of those kings.”

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Ver. 4.

If he who receives the tribute is greater in office and higher in dignity than he who pays it, you must acknowledge the superiority of Melchisedec even to Abraham our great and honoured ancestor.

5. *And indeed those of the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood, have authority¹ under the law to take tithes of the people, that is, of their own*
6. *brethren, though sprung from the stock of Abraham; but he whose pedi-*
7. *gree² is not reckoned from them, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. Now, without all contradiction, the inferior is blessed by the superior³.*

Those descendants of Levi who hold the priestly office, namely the posterity of Aaron, are authorized by the law of Moses to receive tithes, and thus are elevated to an official superiority over their brethren, descended from the same ancestor, the patriarch Abraham: and they claim their dues upon the ground of their descent from the stock of Aaron. But Melchisedec had no such pedigree to plead, and yet he received tithes from Abraham himself, our great progenitor. And what still more strongly proves the superiority of his rank, he even pronounced a blessing upon him, upon the very man to whom the promise was made, *that in him all nations should be blessed*: and Abraham himself submitted to be blessed by Melchisedec; and thus, as all will allow, acknowledged in that royal priest an official superiority. For it is the superior that pronounces, and the inferior that receives, the blessing.

3. The superiority of Melchisedec is further argued from his being represented as a living priest, ver. 8.

8. *And in one case men who die receive tithes, but in the other he received them, concerning whom it is testified that he liveth⁴.*

¹ *Authority.*] “ἐντολὴν, permission. John x. 18, Matt. xix. 7, 8, compared with Mark x. 4, 5.” Peirce.

² *Whose pedigree.*] “whose genealogy is not reckoned from the same stock with them.” Newcome.

³ *The inferior by the superior.*] τὸ ἐλαττον for ὁ ἐλαττων, *the less by the greater*. See John vi. 37. “He who blesses is supposed to be in higher favour with God.” Newcome. “Though Pharaoh was blessed by Jacob, the superiority of the patriarch consisted in nothing more than his greater age.” Priestley.

⁴ *He liveth.*] *i. e.* nothing is mentioned in the history of Melchisedec concerning his death. “The difference here considered is, that of men who *die*, and of one of whom it is witnessed that he *liveth*. Men that die have their successors, to whom tithes are paid: but Melchisedec is not said to have any successor; but himself to continue a priest for ever. So much then as a priest for ever is superior to a successive priesthood, so much must that of Melchisedec excel that of Aaron.” Sykes.

The priests, the descendants of Aaron, are dying men, and the priesthood is transmitted from generation to generation: but Melchisedec has no successor: he appears in the history as a living priest; and though there can be no doubt that he died many ages ago, yet, as he is represented in the history as a living man, and no mention is made of his death, we may take advantage of this circumstance in explaining the similitude, and may in our imaginations conceive of Melchisedec as exercising an immortal priesthood.

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Ver. 8.

4. Melchisedec's superiority is further argued, as the Levitical priests themselves, who received tithes, virtually paid tithes to him, ver. 9, 10.

And, if I may use the expression⁵, even Levi, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met Abraham.

9.

10.

I will mention another argument in favour of the superiority of Melchisedec to Aaron and his descendants; but I do not indeed profess to lay any great stress upon it. Isaac was not begotten when Abraham paid tithes; and therefore all the descendants of Abraham by Isaac, and consequently Levi and all his posterity, including the priests of the house of Aaron, who are themselves the receivers of tithes according to the law, may be considered as having paid tithes in the person of their great progenitor: thus virtually acknowledging the superiority of the order of Melchisedec to that of Aaron, and consequently the superior dignity of the priesthood of Christ to that of the descendants of Levi.

It is not to be supposed that the author of the epistle was so weak as to believe that Melchisedec never died, and that he was, at the time when the epistle was written, a living priest; but he ingeniously seizes upon every circumstance, and every expression, in the brief history of that eminent person, which can by any means be twisted so as to serve his purpose of illustrating the superiority of the priesthood of Melchisedec, which is that of the Messiah, to the priesthood of Aaron, which is that of the law.

It is observable that the writer speaks of the Jewish priests as at *that time* receiving tithes; and that here, and upon all occasions, he, without any affectation, alludes to the temple service as then existing; which is a proof that the epistle was written in the apostolic age, and though not penned by Paul, the style proving the contrary, was probably written by an apostolic man, and contains apostolic doctrine, though shrouded and obscured by allegorical interpretations and inconclusive reasonings.

⁵ *If I may use the expression.*] *ὡς ἔπος εἰπείν*, "in a manner." Wakefield. He softens the harsh expression of Levi paying tithes before he was born, by a qualifying clause equivalent to the Latin phrase *ut ita dicam*. Grotius and Raphelius *in loc.* If there was any validity in the argument, it would prove, as has been often observed, that Melchisedec was superior to Christ as well as to Levi. See Whitby on the place, who guards against the conclusion which some are disposed to draw, that all the posterity of Adam sinned in him, as being in the loins of Adam when he sinned.

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Ver. 10.

II. The writer infers, from the premises which he has advanced, that the Levitical dispensation is to be superseded, and a new dispensation to be introduced under the direction of a superior priesthood, ver. 11—28.

1. The Levitical dispensation is to be superseded, ver. 11—19.

1.) He draws this conclusion from the change which is to take place in the nature and character of the priesthood itself, ver. 11, 12.

11. *Now if perfection¹ were to be obtained by the Levitical priesthood, concerning which² the people received a law, what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchisedec, and that*
12 *he should not be called according³ to the order of Aaron? For if the priesthood be changed, there is of necessity a change of the law also⁴.*

If the promise which had been made to our great ancestor Abraham, that all the families of the earth should be blessed in him, could have been accomplished by the ministry of the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who were instituted agreeably to the laws given by Moses concerning them, there would surely have been no occasion for the introduction of a priesthood of a different order, with different offices, privileges, and powers. There must have been some singularly important reason why the inspired Psalmist should have announced the future appointment of a priest after the order of Melchisedec, rather than that of Aaron. For you cannot but observe that the necessary consequence of a change in the nature and functions of the sacerdotal office is the abrogation of the whole Mosaic institution; the very being of which depends upon the continuation of an order of priests similar

¹ *If perfection.]* The word *τελειωσις* only occurs once more in the New Testament, viz. Luke i. 45. It is there used in the sense of the fulfilment of prophecy, and is translated, There shall be performance of those things which were told her. The word is probably used in the same sense in the present connexion. *q. d.* "If a full accomplishment of the things promised had been made by the Levitical priesthood, there would have been no need of any other priesthood to come after it." Peirce.

² *Concerning which.]* *ἐπ' αὐτῇ.* See this translation vindicated by Peirce. It was an observation of little moment, and indeed hardly consistent with truth, that the law was given under the Levitical priesthood; but it was of great importance to remark, that the law concerning the priesthood was so interwoven with the whole Mosaic institute, that one could not subsist without the other: so that, to supersede the priesthood was to abolish the law.

³ *And not according.]* Mill and Wakefield reject the last clause of the eleventh verse upon the authority of the Æthiopic version, "but evidently without reason," says Dr. Owen, *ap. Bowyer*.

⁴ *There is of necessity a change of the law.]* "How does this follow? The truth is, so much of the law concerns the priesthood immediately, all their sacrifices, purifications, the great day of atonement, and the temple service, that, supposing these to be set aside or abolished, their law itself may properly be said to be changed." Sykes.

to that which was originally appointed by Moses. So that a prophecy of the change of the priesthood is in effect a notice from the highest authority that the law itself would be repealed. Ch. VII.
Ver. 12.

2.) The argument is further corroborated by the consideration, that this predicted priest was not to be of the Aaronic family, but of a different tribe, ver. 13, 14.

Moreover, he of whom⁵ these things are spoken belongeth to another tribe, out of which no one gave attendance at the altar. For it was plain of old⁶ that our Lord was to spring⁷ out of Judah⁸, with respect to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood. 13.
14.

A change of the functions of the priestly office must have involved in it a change of the law; but the scriptures foretell not only a change of the functions, but even of the family of the priests: for you cannot but admit, as our whole nation doth, that the cxth Psalm is a prophecy of the Messiah. Now it is allowed by all that the Messiah was to descend from the tribe of Judah and from the family of David, who were by law prohibited from exercising any of the functions of the priestly office. But the existence of the Mosaic institute depends upon the continuance of the family of Aaron, for the law makes no provision for a succession of priests if that line should fail⁹. The prophecy, therefore, which foretells the transfer of the priestly office into another family, does in effect announce the abolition of the law of Moses.

3.) This conclusion is further strengthened by the prediction of the perpetuity of that priest, who was the object of the prophecy, ver. 15—17.

⁵ *He of whom.*] εφ' ὃν for περὶ ὃ. q. d. the high-priest, of whom these things are spoken: see ver. 6. Dr. Owen ap. Bowyer.

⁶ *It was plain of old.*] Mr. Peirce justifies this sense of the word προδηλον, as distinguished from καταδηλον in the next verse. Mr. Wakefield also adopts it, and mentions it as the interpretation given by the Æthiopic translator.

⁷ *Was to spring.*] ανατεταλκε, *was to spring*: this is Mr. Wakefield's translation, which the connexion requires. "Grammarians observe, that the preterperfect is sometimes used for the present." Peirce.

⁸ *Out of Judah.*] That the Messiah was to descend from the tribe of Judah was inferred from the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10. That he was expected to be the descendant of David, who was of the tribe of Judah, is also apparent from Matt. xxii. 42, Luke xx. 41.

⁹ *The law made no provision for a succession of priests.*] This is a remarkable fact, and a presumptive evidence of the consciousness of the divine authority under which the Jewish law-giver acted. After the death of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron had but two sons left, Eleazar and Ithamar; and as the whole Jewish polity depended upon the continuance of the priesthood, a

- Ch. VII. *And this is still far more evident, if another priest ariseth¹, according*
 Ver. 15. *to the similitude of Melchisedec; who becometh such, not according to the law*
 16. *of a carnal² commandment, but according to the power of an indissoluble*
 17. *life. For the scripture testifieth, "Thou art a priest for ever, according to*
the order of Melchisedec."

There is another circumstance which proves the abolition of the Mosaic institute still more strongly than any which I have already mentioned. Whether Melchisedec himself be alive or dead, it is evident that the person typified by him, and who was to be appointed a priest, according to his similitude and order, is not like the priests of the line of Aaron, constituted by a law which supposes the priest to be a frail and dying man, and which provides successors accordingly, but by an edict which implies that he should possess immortal life and energy. For this is the strain of the prophetic declaration, this is the language of the salutation addressed to him by Jehovah: "Thou art an everlasting priest, according to the order of Melchisedec."

4.) The incompetency of the Mosaic ritual is a further and sufficient reason for its abrogation, ver. 18, 19.

18. *There is, therefore, an abolition³ of the former commandment because of*
 19. *its weakness and unprofitableness, (for the law made nothing perfect⁴),*
but an introduction of a better hope⁵ by which we draw near to God⁶.

person who had legislated upon the principles of human prudence only, would have made some provision for a succession of priests, if the line of Aaron should fail.

¹ *If another priest ariseth.*] *εἰ, if.* Owen *apud* Bowyer, Whitby, Peirce, and Newcome, give *εἰ* the sense of *ὅτι, that, or because.* With Sykes, I adhere to its usual sense *if, q. d.* "it is still more evident that the law must be changed *if* a priest ariseth who is never to die, but to live for ever."

² *Carnal.*] *σαρκινῆς.* Griesbach. The law concerning the priesthood is called a carnal commandment, because the priests who were appointed by it were frail and dying men; whereas that which appointed Jesus as high-priest was a law which supposed the person so appointed, to possess immortal life and vigour, for it ordains him to be an everlasting priest. See Peirce, and Macknight, and Whitby. "A carnal commandment is opposed to the power of an indissoluble life. A carnal commandment, therefore, is a law which concerns the flesh that dies: whereas a priesthood for ever, does not depend upon flesh, which in the common course of things soon comes to an end." Sykes.

³ *There is an abolition.*] The opposition does not lie between the two clauses of ver. 19, as is commonly supposed, but between that and ver. 18, including the clause *for the law made nothing perfect* in a parenthesis, and *γίνεται* being understood. Peirce says, the construction seems to have been mistaken by all commentators. This construction is adopted by Estius, Bengelius, Markland (see Bowyer), Newcome, Wakefield.

⁴ *The law made nothing perfect.*] "The apostle," says Dr. Sykes, "teaches that the law made *nothing*, i. e. *no man*, perfect: he considers it as what it was, instituted for temporal purposes; and consequently unfit and unable to attain the ends which the Jews expected from it. They expected to be justified by God by their observance of the law. No, says the apostle, the law did not propose to make the observers perfect; and therefore the Hebrews ought to

The arguments which I have advanced plainly prove, notwithstanding the strong prepossession of our nation to the contrary, that the dispensation of

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recur to Christ." "The law was unfit and unable to make the priesthood perfect, for it made nothing perfect, and if it made nothing perfect it could not make the priesthood so, or confer the advantages to be expected from the office." Peirce.

Neither of these ingenious and learned expositors appears to me to have correctly apprehended the writer's meaning. Addressing the Hebrews upon their own principles, he argues the superiority of the new covenant by Christ, over the old one introduced by Moses; and contrasts the perfection of the priesthood of Christ, with the imperfection of that of Aaron. Both covenants agree in this, that no provision is made for the wilful transgressor. The soul that sinneth it shall die, is the language of the old covenant. And if a man sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, is the doctrine of the new.

But under the law there were many ways by which a person contracted ceremonial pollution, such as touching a dead body and the like, for recovery from which, provision was made by certain sacrifices and ablutions, by which they were restored to ceremonial purity: but the neglect of which excluded them from the pale and privileges of the commonwealth of Israel. Now it is obvious that many of these ceremonial pollutions might be contracted through inadvertence unknown to the parties themselves; and in the course of a year there would hardly be a single individual Israelite who had not through inadvertence forfeited his privileges as a member of the community of Israel. To obviate this calamity the annual day of atonement was appointed, for sins of ignorance only, Heb. ix. 7, when the high-priest entered into the holy of holies, and sprinkled the blood of the victim before the mercy-seat, after having made a confession of the sins of the people, and having laid his hand upon the head of the scape-goat, which was afterwards sent into the wilderness as a symbol that the sins so atoned were done away: while the sprinkling of the blood indicated that the covenant was renewed, and the congregation reconsecrated. See Lev. xvi. This institution, however, was imperfect, for, 1. It required annual repetition. 2. The priest was obliged to offer a sacrifice annually for himself as well as for the people. 3. The priest was mortal, and the office successive.

In all these views the new covenant greatly excelled the old. 1. The one sacrifice of Christ was equal to all the sacrifices of the law: it consecrated both himself and his followers once for all, so that under the new dispensation there are no ceremonial pollutions, no sins of ignorance; but the individual who is once admitted into the Christian community can never be excluded from it but by his own voluntary transgression. 2. The high-priest is perfect, and being once consecrated is consecrated for ever. 3. He is immortal, and being at the right hand of God in heaven, he is ever present in the celestial holy of holies, interceding, that is, officiating as a priest in the most holy place, so that the benefit of his redemption extends to every believer through every age.

In this manner the author of this epistle carries on a very ingenious parallel between the Aaronic priesthood and the priesthood of Christ, to the great advantage of the latter, in order to soften the prejudices of his Hebrew readers: all the while meaning nothing more than that the dispensation introduced by Christ relieves those who yield obedience to it from the yoke, the ceremonies and the sacrifices of the law, that it requires nothing but the practice of virtue, and is intended to last for ever.

With this key, if I mistake not, it will be easy to understand the scope, the reasonings, and the allusions of this writer, and to see how little foundation this celebrated epistle lays for the modern unscriptural doctrine of atonement, of which it is thought to be the main support, and upon which many lay such an unwarrantable stress.

⁵ *An introduction of a better hope.*] The new dispensation is here called a better hope, because it leads us to hope for that perfection which the law could not reach: a perfect priest, a perfect service, an immutable and everlasting covenant, from the blessings of which nothing can exclude but wilful disobedience.

⁶ *By which we draw near to God.*] Under this new covenant we have access to God, as reconciled through his son. All our past ceremonial and legal offences are forgiven: with the true Israel of God we are admitted into the holy place, where we take our stand as acceptable

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Moses is to be abrogated and annulled by the superior dispensation of the Messiah: and it is fit that it should be so; for the dispensation of rites and ceremonies was not able to fulfill the elevated expectations which the promises of God to our pious ancestors, and particularly to Abraham, justly excite. I have shown that the Levitical priesthood is imperfect and inadequate to the desired end. And no wonder, for the law could make nothing perfect; and though it answered a temporary purpose, and was partially beneficial, it fell far short, both in extent and in degree, of the complete accomplishment of the promise. This dispensation therefore is justly set aside, and a new œconomy is introduced, which lays a foundation for better hopes, and will be productive of far more extensive and durable blessings: this is the dispensation of which Christ is the head, by which not merely a separate and privileged order of men, but all believers, without distinction, are admitted into the sanctuary of God, and are encouraged to approach the throne of mercy. In conformity to the institutions of this new and liberal dispensation, we now regulate our modes of worship, and by its merciful declarations we are authorized to regard the great object of our religious homage as a reconciled God, a father and a friend, from whose favour nothing can separate us but our own voluntary transgression.

2. The great superiority of Jesus, the high-priest of the new dispensation, is illustrated and established, ver. 20—28.

1.) He was inaugurated with an oath, ver. 20—22.

20. *Moreover, inasmuch as he was not made a high-priest without an oath,*
 21. *(for they indeed were made priests without an oath, but this with an oath,*
by him who said to him, The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou
 22. *art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec,) by so much was Jesus*
made the surety¹ of a more excellent covenant².

and approved worshipers, separated from the unholy and unclean: no longer needing an annual atonement for legal transgression, but continually abiding in the love and favour of God, unless we exclude ourselves by actual transgression.

¹ *The surety.*] εγγυος, a sponsor, or surety: this is the only place in which the word occurs in the New Testament. The priests under the Mosaic covenant were sureties that God would perform his promises to the Jews, because they offered those sacrifices which were the appointed ratification of the divine promise. Jesus is the surety of the new covenant, because his blood ratifies the promises of it. See Peirce.

² *More excellent covenant.*] διαθηκη, a covenant, the usual sense of the word improperly rendered *testament*. The Mosaic dispensation was the old covenant, in which the contracting parties were God and the Jewish nation: the promise of the covenant was the possession of Palestine: the conditions of the contract were, abstaining from idolatry and obedience to the ceremonial law: the sanction and seal of the covenant was the blood of the victims.

The

Having proved, from premises which cannot be controverted, that the Jewish scriptures themselves announce the abolition of the institution of Moses, and the introduction of another and better order of things, I now advance to state, upon grounds equally satisfactory, that Jesus, the high-priest of this new dispensation, sustains an office of far greater dignity than any of the priests, the descendants of Aaron: and my first argument is taken from the superior solemnity with which Jesus was inaugurated into his sacred office. It cannot indeed be denied that Aaron and his posterity were, by divine direction, selected and consecrated to exercise the office of priests under the Mosaic institution: and this was no doubt a very solemn designation. But the solemnity with which Jesus was publicly announced to this high and holy office was far superior: for when the inspired psalmist foretells the priesthood of the Messiah, he declares, in the name of God, that this appointment is confirmed and ratified by the immutable oath of God himself. And as the appointment of the priesthood under the Mosaic dispensation was a proof and pledge of the mercy of God to his chosen people, and of his willingness to maintain a gracious intercourse with them, and to fulfill his promises to them, so is the appointment of Jesus, the true Messiah, as the high-priest of the new dispensation, a pledge of the faithfulness of God to that covenant of mercy into which all believers are now introduced, and of the full accomplishment of all the great and precious promises contained in it: and the superior solemnity of his inauguration proves a proportionable superiority both in the importance of its blessings, and in the dignity of him who is the pledge and surety of its promises.

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Observe here, 1. That the gospel dispensation is called a covenant, an engagement between two contracting parties, and not a testament, or will, to which it is difficult to annex any distinct idea. In this covenant God promises to all who believe, eternal life, as the reward of faithful obedience. This is a notion which the author here introduces incidentally, and upon which he afterwards insists at large.

2. Of this covenant Jesus is the surety: not as though the promise of God could not be credited without the addition of human security, much

The Christian dispensation is the new covenant, in which God and believers are the contracting parties: the promise of the covenant is a resurrection to immortality: the conditions of this covenant are faith and obedience: the mediator and surety of the covenant is Jesus Christ, and the sanction and seal of it is his blood shed upon the cross. "The reasoning is," says Dr. Sykes, "the more solemn and awful the manner is in which any one is appointed to his office, the more important is the office."

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less can it be supposed that the writer means to insinuate, as some strangely maintain, that Jesus is surety for the sinner's debt, or a substitute to bear the divine wrath in the sinner's stead: but Jesus is the surety of the gospel covenant, first, because his mission is a proof and pledge of the divine mercy; and secondly, because his death was the seal, or solemn ratification, of the evangelical promise. This is the topic upon which the writer enlarges in the succeeding chapters.

2.) The priesthood of Christ is perpetual, ver. 23—25.

23. *And those priests indeed were many, because they were hindered from con-*
24. *tinuing by death; but he, because he continueth for ever, retaineth the priest-*
25. *hood without succession*¹: *whence also he is able to save completely*² *those*
*who approach to God through him, as he ever liveth to intercede for them*³.

¹ *Without succession.*] ἀπαράστατον, “a priesthood that does never pass from one to another. The Aaronical priests were many and successive; but our high-priest, by reason of his continuance for ever, exercises an unchangeable priesthood. This is another reason for the superior excellence of the Christian covenant.” Sykes.

² *To save completely.*] σωζειν εις το παντελες, παν τελος εχων—εις παντελες, prorsus, perfectè, plenè, consummatè, omnino.” Schleusner. “Christ living for ever himself could save for ever them that came to God through him. Παντελες always signifies completely.” Sykes.

The writer is here running a parallel between the functions of the Aaronic high-priest and Jesus Christ the high-priest of our profession, in order to show the great superiority of the latter. The Aaronic priests, in their successive generations, on the day of atonement sanctified the people, and restored to the commonwealth of Israel those who had forfeited their privileges by sins of ignorance: ch. ix. 7. Christ is an immortal high-priest; he ever lives to save completely those who approach to God through him. Believers in the gospel are saved through Christ; by faith in him they are rescued from the bondage of idolatry and vice, and from the condemning sentence of the law. They draw near to God through him: they become a holy people, admitted to worship in the holy place; separated by their profession from the unbelieving world. If they apostatize, they are turned out of the sanctuary into the congregation of unbelievers, and delivered over to Satan: but if they do not wilfully transgress, nothing can exclude them from the new covenant. Under the law, sins of ignorance excluded from the Mosaic covenant; to the blessings of which they were restored by the offices of the high-priest on the day of atonement. Not so under the gospel: no sins of ignorance, no involuntary violations of ritual precepts, exclude from the new covenant. Christ has completely saved his disciples from all lapses of this kind; and as he lives for ever, so the benefits of his salvation extend to all his followers to the end of time.

³ *He ever liveth to intercede for them.*] εντυγχανω is a word of very general import. It signifies to interpose in any way, either υπερ for, or κατα against, another. See Sykes. Mr. Wakefield renders it, “to manage their concerns for them.” He refers to Epictetus, sect. 40, and to Heb. ix. 24; and observes, “there is no need of authorities to establish this sense of the word. It is applied to Christ only twice in the New Testament, here and Rom. viii. 34; and upon the slender foundation of these two texts is built the modern and popular doctrine of Christ's intercession, and pleading with the Father the merits of his blood and righteousness: a doctrine upon which many lay a mighty stress, though it is no where to be found in scripture.

I have ventured to use the word *intercede*, taking it in the sense of a learned writer in the *Commentaries and Essays*, vol. ii. p. 265; viz. “to officiate, to discharge the office of a high-priest on their behalf.” The Jewish high-priest on the day of atonement was to sprinkle the blood of the victim upon, and before, the mercy-seat. See Lev. xvi. 19. He was not instructed

The descendants of Aaron were frail and mortal, and provision was made for the transmission of their office from generation to generation: but the priest who is solemnly introduced as invested with an office similar to that of Melchisedec, is at the same time announced as one who was to exercise a perpetual priesthood. Nor is any provision made for a successor to him in office, nor any notice given of the introduction of a succeeding dispensation. Such a priest is Jesus: being raised from the dead, he lives for ever: to him therefore no successor is nominated; and to the end of time all who are as it were introduced by him into the sanctuary of God, shall derive from him all the blessings which in his sacerdotal capacity he is authorized to confer; because he is already in the most holy place, where he will ever be engaged in the duties of his sacred office. In other words, since Christ is risen from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God, the law of ceremonies is superseded, sins of ignorance are abolished, sacrifices and days of expiation are unnecessary, the office of a priest is superfluous, every thing which the law requires may be considered as accomplished in Jesus; and no believer to the end of time can ever be excluded from the benefits of the new dispensation but by his own voluntary act, by wilful presumptuous transgression.

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Ver. 25.

3.) The qualifications of Jesus for the sacerdotal office are peculiar and transcendent, ver. 26—28.

For such a high-priest suited us⁴, who is holy, harmless, unpolluted, separate from sinners⁵, and raised above the heavens⁶.

26.

to offer any prayer or to utter a word. By this action he *interceded, interposed*, did all that God required for the people, and they were *atoned, reconciled, restored* to covenant, which they had lost by sins of ignorance. But Christ is the Christian high-priest, who is passed into the heavens to the right hand of God, into the holy of holies; where he appears, not like the Jewish high-priest for a short time, once in a year, but continually and for ever. And by this appearance alone, without any verbal address or any external act, he *intercedes*; and accomplishes that purpose completely, and for ever, which the Jewish high-priest effected on the day of atonement only, viz. preserving a memorial, that all legal offences had ceased, and that nothing but their own voluntary apostasy can exclude his followers from the privileges of the covenant.

Not that any thing real, or virtual, is said or done by the Christian high-priest; or that our Lord ever, properly speaking, performs the office of high-priest at all, any more than he sustains the character of a shepherd, a householder, or a husbandman. Nothing of this sort occurs in any other portion of the Christian scriptures, and here it is only introduced metaphorically by this ingenious but unknown writer; who pursues the figure as far as it will bear, for no other purpose than to reconcile the Hebrew believers to the offensive doctrine of a crucified Messiah.

⁴ *Such a high-priest suited us.*] “ἐπεπε, conveniebat, talem pontificem nobis dari: necessarius nobis erat talis pontifex maximus.” Rosenmuller. “became us.” Public Version. “was proper for us.” Wakefield. The superior dignity of the dispensation required a proportionate superiority in its chief officer.

⁵ *Holy, harmless, unpolluted, separate from sinners.*] *holy, ὅσιος, not ἅγιος.* It expresses a

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Ver 26.

The gospel dispensation being so much superior to that of Moses, required the ministrations of a superior high-priest; and such is that exalted high-priest whom God has appointed for us: eminent for his moral virtues as well as for his sacerdotal qualifications; pious towards God; benevolent to men; exempt from all ceremonial impurity; separated from the unholy and unbelieving world; set apart for the service of the spiritual sanctuary, and admitted into heaven itself, the most holy place, the immediate presence of God.

The writer means nothing more than that Jesus is fully qualified for the office to which he is appointed; but in order to accommodate himself to the prejudices of the Jewish Christians, he uses language expressive of the qualifications of a Jewish high-priest, not meaning to be taken in a strict literal sense.

27. *Who needeth not from time to time¹, like those high-priests², first to offer sacrifices for his own sins, and after that for those of the people, for this he did once for all³, when he offered up himself.*

moral quality, not a separation to the service of God. "pious, merciful." Peirce. Harmless, ἀνακός. "If the former character be understood to express his respect to God, this may import his innocence towards men." Peirce. Unpolluted, ἀμικτός. "This is analogous to what was prescribed for the high-priests under the old law; who were above all others to avoid legal defilements, and more especially on the great day of expiation, when they were to go into the most holy place." Peirce.—"Qui non tantum pollutus non fuerit istis contaminationibus externis, sed nec ullo vitio." Rosenmüller. Separate from sinners. Free from all sin, ceremonial and moral: completely sanctified, and dedicated to God.

⁶ Raised above the heavens.] "exalted above the angels." Peirce. But surely there can be no doubt that the writer alludes to what he had said a little before, ch. iv. 14, where he speaks of Christ as having passed into the heavens, as the high-priest into the most holy place.

¹ From time to time.] καθ' ἡμέραν, daily, from time to time. The word is indefinite, and often used for time. The expression is equivalent to κατ' ἐνιαυτόν (ch. x. 1.), every year. The day of atonement came but once a year. Peirce, Sykes.

² Like those high-priests.] The duty of the high-priest on the day of atonement is described Levit. xvi.; where he is required, first to offer a sacrifice for his own sins, and then for those of the people. But it was only for ceremonial pollution and sins of ignorance, not for voluntary transgressions. This is expressly stated Heb. ix. 7.

³ This he did once for all.] τὸτο γὰρ ἐποίησεν. This text has greatly puzzled the commentators; and is indeed, when rightly understood, a complete refutation of the popular doctrine of the atonement: viz. that Christ died to expiate, or make atonement, or offer satisfaction, or appease the wrath of the Father for the sins, the moral offences of mankind. THIS HE DID ONCE FOR ALL: What? The construction plainly requires, that the antecedent should be, 'he offered sacrifice first for HIS OWN SINS, and after that for those of the people.' So Grotius: "Videtur hic et supra dici c. v. 3. Christus quoque obtulisse non sapius quidem, sed semel pro peccatis non populi tantum, sed et suis." So Crellius: "Principaliter hic de oblatione pro ipsius pontificis peccatis agi, ex superioribus, ipsoque rationum contextu manifestum est." To avoid, however, the shock which it would naturally give to the feelings of those who did not understand the author's meaning, and indeed in perfect consistency with their own mistaken views of the subject, most of the commentators introduce an exceptive clause, unwarranted by the

You know that the high-priest every year, upon the day of atonement, first offers a sacrifice for his own involuntary transgressions, by which he has ceremonially desecrated his character and disqualified himself for his

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text. So Peirce expounds the passage, "Who has no need, like the priests under the law, from time to time to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and after that for the people's. For this latter he did once for all, when he offered up himself; and as to the former, he had no occasion to do it at all." So also Sykes: "He had no sins of his own, and therefore could not offer for them." And Doddridge: "of the former of these he never had need, nor could there be any room for it: and this last he did once for all." See also Whitby, Rosenmuller, &c. And, no doubt, if the writer of the epistle had entertained the same ideas of the doctrine of the atonement which these learned and pious expositors did, he would have made the same reserve; whereas, as Crellius justly remarks, the context plainly points out the sins of the high-priest as the principal object.

In what sense, then, can it justly be said that Christ "offered up a sacrifice for his own sins?" It is universally agreed, that Christ in his moral character was sinless: it is impossible, therefore, that he should have offered sacrifice for his own moral offences, for he had none. Grotius and Crellius, by the *sins of Christ* understand his sufferings, which were terminated by his death: but this interpretation, unnatural in itself, is successfully opposed by Whitby. The plain interpretation is, that the sins of Christ were merely ceremonial, such as the high-priest was accustomed to expiate on the day of atonement: ch. ix. 7. Our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood: ver. 14. He was, therefore, as to the priesthood, in an unconsecrated state; that is, ceremonially a sinner. And as Aaron was consecrated to his priestly office by the blood of animal sacrifices, so Christ was consecrated to his nobler office by his own blood. In this sense he offered a sacrifice for his own sins. This way of representing the death of Christ was adapted to conciliate the prejudices of the Hebrew Christians. Also, as the posterity of Aaron were successively removed by death (ver. 23), successive priests were consecrated by successive sacrifices. But Christ lives for ever, a consecrated priest, and has no successor. Further, priests under the law were subject to infirmity, and might desecrate themselves by ceremonial pollution and inadvertent acts: ver. 28. It was necessary, therefore, that they should be reconsecrated by daily and by annual sacrifices; but Christ being incapable of ceremonial desecration, his one sacrifice is sufficient. He is now perfect for ever.

And, let it be remarked, IN THE VERY SAME SENSE in which Christ offered a sacrifice for his own sins, in that very sense did he offer sacrifice for the sins of the people. There is no distinction. But the sins of Christ were not moral, but ceremonial: the contrary supposition is absurd. Such, then, and no other, are those sins of the people for which Christ offered a sacrifice; like his own, they are not moral, but ceremonial. No sacrifices are appointed for moral offences, either under the old dispensation or the new; no atonement, no appeasing of divine wrath, no satisfaction to offended justice. But as Christ by his one sacrifice consecrated himself for ever, transferred himself from a ceremonially unholy to a ceremonially holy state; so, exactly in the same way, those who believe the gospel are by the sacrifice of Christ made ceremonially pure. From sinners they become saints; they are transferred from the community of unbelievers and enemies to that of believers who are reconciled to God; and from this holy community nothing can exclude them but wilful apostasy, voluntary transgression: and for these no sacrifice is provided.

What the writer means is this: that as Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priestly office by sprinkling of the real blood of the animal victim, Lev. viii. 30: so converts to the gospel are consecrated to God by the figurative application of the blood of Christ; and he gives this view of the purpose of the death of Christ, merely to reconcile the minds of the Hebrews to a fact, to them the most mortifying that could possibly be conceived, the crucifixion of the Messiah.

"We have been directed," says Dr. Priestley, "to a variety of circumstances as implying the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus to that of Aaron: but it is only by way of figure that he can be said to be a priest at all; being in reality no more a priest than he was a door or a vine, or any thing else to which he is occasionally compared."

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office: and after this service he offers another sacrifice for the involuntary transgressions of the people, by which they have excluded themselves from the privileges of the Mosaic covenant: and thus, according to the divine appointment, they become reinstated in their forfeited charter. But the high-priest of the new dispensation is under no such degrading obligation. Being indeed of the tribe of Judah he was ceremonially unholy, and therefore needed a rite of consecration to his priestly office. This rite was his own death: the voluntary sacrifice of himself has consecrated him for ever to the service of God, and, as he cannot again contract ceremonial impurity, he can never need another sacrifice of consecration. The same observation may be applied to all believers. Being consecrated to God by faith in Jesus, while they continue to believe they need no stated renewals of their covenant obligation. Till they exclude themselves by apostasy, or voluntary transgression, they remain the holy servants of God, entitled to all the privileges of the Christian community.

This, I doubt not, is the true sense in which the author uses the harsh expression that Jesus offered up a sacrifice for his own sins. Jesus was the holiest of the human race; and this the writer expressly declares. The sins therefore for which he offered a sacrifice were those ceremonial disqualifications which were inconsistent with the office of high-priest. These he represents as removed by his death, in order to accommodate himself to the notions of the Jews, who thought that no person or thing could be consecrated without shedding of blood.

Observe further, that in the very same sense in which Jesus is said to have offered sacrifice for his own sins, in that identical sense he offered sacrifice for the sins of the people: and that is not in a moral but in a ceremonial sense. He was descended from Judah and not from Levi, and therefore was ceremonially unclean, in the eye of the law a sinner; and, figuratively speaking, he was consecrated by his own blood. And the Mosaic law being now abrogated, Jews and Gentiles are all equally in an unholy uncovenanted state, that is, in a legal sense, sinners. The blood of Jesus ratified the new covenant, and all who believe become thereby ceremonially holy: they are introduced into a privileged state, which if they improve, they shall ultimately partake of all its promises in their fullest extent. Not a word is said of the sacrifice of Christ satisfying the justice of God, and making compensation for moral offences.

For the law constituteth high-priests men liable to infirmity; but the declaration by oath, which was after the law, constituteth a son, made perfect, for ever. Ch. VII. Ver. 28.

It is highly reasonable that the Jewish high-priests should at stated times renew their sacrifices; because, being liable to inadvertencies, and even to external accidents, by which they were occasionally disqualified, it became necessary to the validity of their ministrations that their inauguration should be as it were from time to time renewed. But that great high-priest, who was long after the promulgation of the law designated to his office by the solemnity of an oath, is liable to no such imperfection. He cannot, by any ceremonial defect, disqualify himself for his high station; but being, by his resurrection from the dead, declared to be the son of God, he remains for ever a consecrated priest, complete in every qualification of the sacerdotal character.

SECTION VI.

THE WRITER now proceeds to reconcile the minds of the believing Hebrews to the very offensive doctrine of a suffering Messiah, by representing the death of Jesus as the sacrifice of an illustrious victim to ratify the conditions of the new and better covenant. Ch. VIII. 1.—x. 18.

I.

The writer represents the priestly office of Christ as executed in the heavenly sanctuary, of which the grand Mosaic tabernacle was but a faint imperfect copy, ver. 1—6.

When God commanded Moses to construct a magnificent tabernacle for the purposes of religious worship, he not only gave him the most explicit directions concerning even the minutest particulars, but he exhibited to his view upon the Mount an exact model of the building which was about to be reared, requiring a strict conformity to this model in every particular in his future operations. See Exod. xxv. The writer of this epistle, in order to accommodate himself to the prejudices and feelings of the believing Hebrews, represents this visionary tabernacle as having a real existence in heaven, and describes Jesus as the officiating priest in this celestial sanctuary, and performing offices here similar to those performed by the priests of the Mosaic

CH. VIII. tabernacle, but in a style as much superior as heaven to earth, and as a perfect model to a faint imperfect copy.

This is the idea and the scenery which we must carry in our minds if we are desirous to understand the sense and design of the author in the following chapters: and it must be particularly noted, that as the tabernacle which Moses saw in the Mount was a visionary and not a real structure, so every thing which the writer here advances concerning Christ's officiating in this visionary sanctuary, is also visionary and scenical, and not real. The majority of readers, and even of commentators, not adverting to this circumstance, having understood that in a literal which was intended in a symbolical sense, have run into the most unaccountable and unintelligible, not to say absurd, doctrines concerning the priesthood of Christ, and the satisfaction made by his atonement to the divine justice for the sins of men; nothing of which is intended or alluded to by the author, whose whole meaning terminates in this simple proposition, that the new covenant was ratified by the blood of Jesus. Let him now speak for himself.

1. To prepare the way for what he was about to advance concerning the purposes of the death of Christ, he briefly recapitulates the circumstances of his sacerdotal office and exaltation, ver. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. *Now the chief article¹ of what has been said is this, We have such a high-priest², who is now sitting at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens³, a minister of the most holy place⁴, even of the true tabernacle⁵ which the Lord hath fixed, and not man⁶.*

I have written much to illustrate the distinction between the priesthood

¹ *The chief article.*] The Alexandrine manuscript reads *εἰς* for *ἐπὶ*. *q. d.* This is the chief among all the things which have been said. In this sense the text is understood by the Syriac and Vulgate, and by Chrysostom and Œcumenius. See Peirce, Whitby, and Grotius.

² *Such a high-priest.*] *τοιοῦτον* that is, such an one as became us, such as I have described. See ch. vii. 26.

³ *The right hand of the throne.*] See Ps. cx. 1. *i. e.* a priest who corresponds with the prophecy, after the order of Melchisedec, both priest and king. The phrase, "at the right hand of the throne," expresses dignity and authority: how far it is personal with regard to Christ, is nowhere revealed. But he rules his church by his gospel; that is, his law.

⁴ *Most holy place.*] "*ἅγιον*, the most holy place. See ch. ix. 8, 12, 24, x. 19." Newcome.

⁵ *Even of the true tabernacle.*] *καί, even*; an expression exegetical of the former. The true tabernacle is not heaven, as Newcome and others explain it, but that tabernacle which Moses saw in the Mount; which he supposes to have a real existence in heaven, and to be the sanctuary in which Jesus in his exalted state officiates.

⁶ *Which the Lord hath fixed.*] The tabernacle which Moses saw was made by God himself, of which that constructed by Moses was a poor imperfect copy.

of Melchisedec and that of Aaron, and to show the great superiority of Jesus, who is a priest of the former description, to the Levitical priests, who are of the order of Aaron. The main point that I mean to establish is this, which I would have you keep in mind, that you may understand what I have further to advance, namely, that we who are parties in the new dispensation have a high-priest in every respect suited to the dispensation under which we live; perfect in his character, completely qualified for his office, who in his regal capacity is advanced to the highest station of dignity and authority in the church; and in his sacerdotal office has entered into that celestial sanctuary which God himself has constructed; into that original and splendid tabernacle, which no human skill or power could have reared, and which was exhibited to Moses as a model for that tabernacle which he was commanded to build.

Ch. VIII.
Ver. 2.

2. Under the character of a priest it was the office of Jesus to present a sacrifice, ver. 3.

Moreover, every high-priest is constituted to offer both gifts and sacrifices: therefore it is necessary that this high-priest also should offer something.

3.

You well know that the business of the high-priest is to offer gifts and sacrifices: such was the duty of Melchisedec, and such the office of Aaron and his successors: since therefore Jesus is foretold under the character of a high-priest, you are naturally led to expect that he likewise must have somewhat to offer; and so he has: what this offering is I shall soon explain at large.

3. By the law of Moses he was excluded from officiating in the earthly temple, ver. 4—5.

But if he were on earth, he would not be a priest⁷; since there are priests

4.

⁷ *He would not be a priest.*] It is debated among divines, whether Jesus officiated as a priest on earth. The controversy is frivolous; because it is only in a loose and figurative sense that he is said to be a priest at all. As he voluntarily submitted to death for the benefit of mankind, he may be said as a priest to have offered himself as a sacrifice. But it suited the design of the author of this epistle to represent Jesus as not interfering with the Levitical priesthood, and therefore as not invested with the sacerdotal office till he was introduced into the celestial tabernacle. Dr. Sykes argues from this text, “1. That Jesus never did act as a priest on earth. 2. That he did not offer himself as a sacrifice upon the cross: for, if he had, he must have acted as a priest. 3. That the cross is not, nor can it be considered in any sense as, an altar. 4. That the oblation of himself upon earth, or the shedding his blood, was no part of his sacerdotal office: for this was all done and over before his priesthood began.” “If there is any

Ch. VIII. *who offer gifts according to the law; who perform divine service¹ with the*
 Ver. 5. *copy and shadow² of heavenly things; as Moses was instructed by God³*
when he was about to make the tabernacle; for, See, saith He, that thou
make all according to the model shown thee on the Mount. Exod. xxv. 40.

The Messiah having been foretold as a great high-priest, you were naturally led to expect a splendid ritual, and are ready to take offence at the simplicity of Christian institutions. But if you reflect, you must see, that by the law of Moses he was necessarily excluded from officiating in the earthly sanctuary: being of the tribe of Judah, and a priest of a different order, he would not be suffered to invade the office of the Levitical priests. These, and these only, were appointed to officiate in the earthly tabernacle; which, though framed agreeably to the express direction of God, and very splendid in its structure and mode of worship, was, after all, nothing more than a faint imperfect copy of that transcendently glorious model which was exhibited by God to Moses in the Mount, and in which our great high-priest now officiates.

4. The services in which Jesus is employed are far more honourable than those of the Levitical priesthood, ver. 6.

6. *But now he hath obtained a more excellent ministry⁴, inasmuch as he is also the mediator⁵ of a better covenant, the law of which hath been established⁶ on better promises⁷.*

strength," says Peirce, "in our author's reasoning, as no doubt there is a great deal, I can't see how it can consist with the assertion that Christ was a priest in his death. For if he could not be a priest on earth, because there were priests who offered gifts according to the law, the same reason would hold good while he actually was upon earth."

¹ *Perform divine service.*] λατρευσι, "pay religious service." Wakefield.—"λατ. proprie, servio, colo religiosè, haud raro, per sacra facere, munere sacerdotali fungi, reddendum." Schleusner.

² *With the copy and shadow.*] That is, they do service in that tabernacle and with those holy instruments; which are a faint imperfect copy of what was exhibited to Moses in the Mount. See Peirce. "In the idea of this writer, this superior sanctuary is that in which Jesus now officiates; but it is evident, that what was shown in the Mount was nothing more than a pattern of what was to be made." Dr. Priestley.

³ *Instructed by God.*] κεχρηματισαι. Newcome. "according to that divine direction." Wakefield. "χρηματιζω proprie aliquam rem tracto—oraculum divinum edo." Schleusner.

⁴ *A more excellent ministry.*] "Because the service which he conducts is that of the heavenly tabernacle." Peirce.

⁵ *The mediator.*] that is, the medium of communication between God and man; as Moses was the mediator between God and the Israelite nation. Gal. iii. 19. There is no greater mystery in the mediation of Jesus than in that of Moses.

⁶ *The law of which hath been established.*] So Mr. Wakefield translates the word γενομοθετηται.

⁷ *On better promises.*] "Eternal life, not temporal blessings." Newcome.

The services of our high-priest are not attended with any circumstances of external grandeur ; for they are invisible, being performed in the heavenly sanctuary : but they are nevertheless far more dignified and solemn than those of the temple on earth, and necessarily must be so, because the covenant which he has introduced and sanctioned is far superior, both in its obligations and its promises, to that which was promulgated by Moses and ratified by the sacrifices appointed by the law.

Ch. VIII.
Ver. 6.

II.

Having spoken incidentally of a better covenant, the author digresses⁸ to show that such a covenant had been the plain object of a direct prophecy. Ch. viii. 7, *to the end*.

1. It is remarked that the imperfection of the first prepared the way for the introduction of the second covenant, ver. 7.

For if that first covenant had been unexceptionable, there had been no room⁹ for a second.

7.

Having mentioned our great high-priest as the person appointed by God to introduce and ratify a new and better covenant than that of Moses, I must allow that this appointment does necessarily imply that the Mosaic dispensation, though of divine institution, and excellently adapted to answer the end for which it was intended, was not calculated to accomplish in its full extent the promise of God to our great ancestor Abraham : for if it had been able perfectly to bring to pass all the purposes of the divine wisdom and mercy, it would not have been set aside as deficient, to make room for a more perfect comprehensive dispensation.

2. That such a dispensation was intended to supersede the Mosaic ritual, is argued from the clear and explicit prophecy of Jeremiah¹⁰, ver. 8—12.

For finding fault¹¹ with the former covenant, the scripture saith to them,

8.

⁸ *The author digresses.*] Mr. Peirce observes, that this paragraph comes in by way of parenthesis ; and that the beginning of the ninth chapter connects properly with the sixth verse of the preceding.

⁹ *There had been no room.*] See Worsley. “ Gr. ‘ no place would have been sought.’ ” Newcome.

¹⁰ *Prophecy of Jeremiah.*] This paragraph is taken from Jer. xxxi. 31—34. The whole chapter is a plain prediction of the conversion and restoration of the Israelite nation, which has not yet received its accomplishment. The citation is made from the LXX.

¹¹ *Finding fault.*] μεμφομενος. “ minoris faciens pactum prius, dicit illis,” &c. Grotius

- Ch. VIII. *Behold the days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will execute with the house*
 Ver. 9. *of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant: not according to the*
covenant which I made with their fathers, at the time when I took them by
the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, when they continued not
 10. *in my covenant, and I gave up my care of them¹, saith the Lord. For*
this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those
days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws² into their minds, and I will
inscribe them on their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall
 11. *be to me a people. And they shall not teach³ every one his fellow-citizen⁴,*
and every one his brother, saying, "Know the Lord", for all shall know
 12. *me from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their*

¹ *I gave up my care of them.*] ημελησα. So Wakefield. This is the reading of the Alexandrine copy of the LXX. adopted by this writer, and approved by the majority of critics. It is cited from Jer. xxxi. 32, where the original reads בעלתי, which in the public version is rendered, *although I was a husband to them*. To account for the sense which the LXX. have given, Dr. Pococke says, that the word בעל in the Arabic signifies, not only to govern, but to reject, to despise, to nauseate. See Whitby. Others have conjectured that the true reading of the Hebrew text is געלתי, *I have loathed*: see Jer. xiv. 19. And others, that the true reading is בוזתי, *I abhorred*: see Zech. xi. 8. This is the reading preferred by Peirce and Newcome.—See Peirce's learned note.

But Dr. Blayney, in his judicious and learned *Translation of Jeremiah*, printed at the Clarendon press, 1784, contends for the purity of the Hebrew text, and vindicates the translation of it in the public version, which he adopts. He appeals to ch. iii. 14, where the same word occurs in the same sense; and observes, that εμελησα is the word which stands in the generality of copies of the LXX., which materially agrees with the Hebrew: "although I took care of, or protected them." In the Alexandrine copy, as well as the Epistle to the Hebrews, the word ημελησε is found; which bears a quite contrary sense. But Dr. B. expresses a doubt whether εμελησε might not have been the original word in the epistle, but altered by the inadvertence of some early transcriber. For this conjecture, however, there appears to be no authority, nor indeed any necessity.

² *I will put my laws.*] Dr. Whitby observes that these two metaphors, in the scriptures and in Jewish writers, signify, 1.) A clear and perspicuous revelation of the mind and will of God. 2.) An efficacious impression of them upon the memory and the soul. Deut. xxx. 11, 14, Rom. x. 8, 9, Rom. ii. 15, Deut. vi. 6, Deut. xi. 18, Prov. iii. 1, 3, vii. 1.

³ *They shall not teach, &c.*] "It cannot be imagined," says Mr. Peirce, "that the common methods of instruction, and particularly of educating youth, will then be laid aside, and that all will be done by an immediate inspiration. The expressions here used must be understood not absolutely but comparatively; and hereby is intended the vast increase there shall be among them of the knowledge of God."

Dr. Priestley has a very peculiar idea of the state of things which will take place in the Hebrew nation when these prophecies are fulfilled. "That in this new and future state of things the forms of the ancient law will be resumed and continue to the end of time," says that enlightened interpreter of scripture, "is evident from the very particular description of the temple, and the service of it, in the book of Ezekiel. And that there will be no change of the priesthood, is evident from its being there declared that it will be in the family of Zadoc, while the temporal sovereignty will be in the family of David; so that both the king and the priest will be according to the ancient constitution, and the business of sacrificing will be conducted by them as it had been before."

⁴ *Fellow-citizen.*] πολιτην. This is the reading of the Alexandrine, Clermont, and Corbey manuscripts, and of many others, and of the Syriac and other versions. It is taken into the text by Griesbach and Newcome. The received text reads πλησιον, *neighbour*.

unrighteous deeds, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Ch. VIII. Ver. 12.

This declaration of the prophet Jeremiah, in which, in the name of God, he solemnly announces the divine purpose of introducing a new and a better covenant, with the express design of superseding that of Moses, demonstrates the truth of the doctrine which I have advanced, that the Mosaic covenant was not intended, nor calculated, to fulfill all the gracious purposes of God to his chosen people: and the introduction of this new covenant may in this view be considered as expressing dissatisfaction with the old covenant because of its imperfection, though well adapted to the circumstances in which it was given. You ought not, therefore, to be offended when you are told that the Mosaic œconomy is to be superseded, since your own prophets so expressly teach the same doctrine.

This prophecy is cited by the writer, from the Greek translation of Jer. xxxi. 31—34, which in the main agrees with the Hebrew original. Upon this prediction we may observe,

1. That it does not represent the Mosaic covenant as faulty and unworthy of God, but merely as incomplete, and incompetent to answer all his beneficent purposes to the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

2. This prophecy extends to the whole Hebrew nation, consisting of all the twelve tribes, and is limited to them: it is accompanied in the original text of Jeremiah with a promise of restoration to their own country: it certainly was not fulfilled in their restoration after the Babylonian captivity, nor has it yet received its proper accomplishment. It therefore relates to some important blessings which are yet in reserve in the councils of divine wisdom for that extraordinary people.

3. The writer of the epistle represents the new covenant, which is the subject of this prophecy, as that which God has made with believers in general, whether Jews or heathen, by Jesus Christ, and which is ratified by his death. And there seems no reason to doubt that this is the true sense of the prophecy.

4. In this view, as applied to the Hebrew nation, the prophecy announces that the descendants of Abraham shall at length embrace the Christian faith, and shall then be restored to their original country: an event, the expectation of which is countenanced by many other passages in the Jewish and

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Ver. 12.

Christian scriptures, and which, when it takes place, will establish beyond all doubt the divine authority of the Christian religion.

5. God is said in this, as in some other passages of scripture, to do that which is the certain and foreknown result of the dispensations of his providence. The Hebrew nation will, in the course of events, at the appointed time be induced to believe and obey the gospel. This is foretold by the expressions, "I will put my laws into their minds and inscribe them upon their hearts."

6. Under the old dispensation rites and ceremonies were so numerous, that public instructors were indispensably necessary to teach the people their legal duties. It is here foretold, that the new dispensation would be so plain and simple that all should understand it almost without the necessity of instruction: "They shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord'; for all shall know me¹, from the least of them to the greatest. A plain intimation, not that all instruction will be superfluous, for then human nature must cease to be what it is, but that all ritual observations, which could only be performed by a regular priesthood, should cease; and perhaps, that, in the flourishing state of the Messiah's kingdom, there would be no occasion for a distinct order of men to officiate as public instructors.

7. The great promise of the new covenant is, that Jehovah will be their God, and that all iniquity shall be forgiven, that is, that he will take believers into covenant at present, and reward the virtuous with happiness hereafter. He is not ashamed to be called their God, because he hath prepared for them a city. So our Lord himself argues the doctrine of a future life: he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him, and will be raised by him.

3. He draws the inference that the old covenant will soon vanish, ver. 13.

13. *When he saith, A new covenant, he representeth the first as old; but what is going to decay from age must shortly disappear².*

¹ *All shall know me.*] Dr. Macknight observes, that "this promise is amply accomplished under the new covenant, by the multiplication of the copies of the scriptures, the translation of them into many different languages, the preaching of the word, the regular performance of the public worship of God, and by the pains which the ministers and teachers of religion take in instructing the people."

² *Must shortly disappear.*] Wakefield. *εγγυς* this word implies, that the temple service was not abolished at the time when this epistle was written. Whitby says, "that though the Judaical sacrifices after the death of Christ ceased to be obliging, yet these words seem to in-

The Mosaic ritual is wearing out apace and falling rapidly into decay: in a very short time, though you little think of it, it will be suddenly and totally dissolved. Ch. VIII.
Ver. 13.

The writer is here supposed to allude to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans, under Titus Vespasian: which catastrophe took place about ten years after this epistle is conjectured to have been written.

III.

The writer argues, that as persons and things in the earthly tabernacle were purified and consecrated by the blood of animal victims, so it was expedient that under the new and better covenant, and in the heavenly tabernacle, they should be purified and consecrated with the blood of a better victim, that is, of the high-priest, the Messiah himself. Ch. ix. 1—14. Ch. IX.

1. He gives a brief detail of the grand Mosaic tabernacle and its furniture, ver. 1—5.

Now indeed the first covenant³ had ordinances of worship and a worldly sanctuary⁴. Ver. 1.

The Mosaic covenant, as you well know, had its rites of religious worship, and its holy places; but these, though of divine appointment, and very splendid, were in real value greatly inferior to those in which Jesus officiates, and into which his followers are introduced. The Mosaic sanctuary and its costly furniture were made of earthly materials, and by human artificers, an imperfect imitation of a perfect model.

For there was a tabernacle made. The first, in which was the candlestick and the table⁵, and the shew-bread. This was called holy. 2.

timate that the church, state, and polity of the Jews was not come to its full period till the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem." "According to some, the destruction of the city and temple by the Romans happened ten years after the writing of this epistle." Newcome.

³ *The first covenant.*] Many copies read *σκηνη*, *tabernacle*; and Dr. Whitby, Mr. Peirce, and Dr. Doddridge think that this word best suits the connexion. But *ἡ πρώτη* seems evidently to refer to *την πρώτην* in the preceding sentence, where it is unquestionably used for *the first covenant*; and the meaning of the writer is, that as the first dispensation had its tabernacle and furniture, so also has the second. See Macknight, Newcome, &c.

⁴ *Worldly sanctuary.*] "public sanctuary." Wakefield. *κοσμικον*, *worldly*, in opposition to the true and heavenly tabernacle exhibited to Moses on the Mount, ch. viii. 2, 5. See Peirce and Newcome. Some commentators suppose that it is called *worldly*, as being a symbolical representation of the universe according to the notions of the Jews. But the other sense is preferable. See Grotius and Macknight.

⁵ *The table, &c.*] Exod. xxv. 23—30, xl. 22—26.

Ch. IX.
Ver. 2.

You remember that, agreeably to the directions of God to Moses, Exod. xxvi., a splendid tabernacle was erected in the wilderness, which was divided into two apartments. The first, and the largest, was called the holy place, which contained, amongst other things, the golden candlestick with its seven branches, and the table upon which were placed twelve loaves, which were renewed every sabbath, as a tribute of gratitude to divine providence.

3. *And behind the second veil¹ was the tabernacle, which was called the*
4. *holy of holies², containing the golden censer³, and the ark of the covenant⁴, overlaid every where with gold: in which was the golden pot that held the*
5. *manna⁵, and the rod of Aaron that blossomed⁶, and the tables of the cove-*
- nant⁷, and over it the cherubim of glory⁸, shadowing the mercy-seat⁹, concerning which it is not my present purpose to speak particularly.

In the Mosaic tabernacle you know were two veils: one hung down over the entrance of the tabernacle and screened the priests, while performing the rites of religious worship, from the gaze of the profane. The second veil

¹ *The second veil.*] The first veil opened into the holy place, Exod. xxvi. 36, 37; the second veil separated the holy from the most holy place, Exod. xxvi. 31, 32, xxxvi. 35.

² *Holy of holies:*] the form of the Hebrew superlative, *q. d. the most holy place*, into which none entered but the high-priest on the day of atonement; here the shechinah, or cloud of glory, rested upon the mercy-seat between the cherubim.

³ *Golden censer.*] Moses makes no mention of a golden censer; but as the priest was required, Lev. xvi. 12, 13, to carry a censer with incense with him into the most holy place, there probably was, as the Jews say, a golden censer appropriated to this use; which might be laid up in the most holy place, very near the veil, so that the priest might reach it without going into the holy of holies. The writer makes no mention of the golden altar, for the construction of which, and its uses, very particular directions were given to Moses, Exod. xxx. 1—10. I should have suspected that *censer* (*θυμιατηριον*) had been a slip of the author's pen for *altar* (*θυσιαστηριον*), or the error of some early transcriber; only that this writer, himself a Hebrew, writing to Hebrews, could not possibly have mistaken the situation of the golden altar, which was before the veil, not within it.

⁴ *The ark of the covenant.*] Exod. xxv. 10—16, xxxvii. 1—5.

⁵ *The golden pot.*] Exod. xvi. 32—34. The LXX. expressly call it a golden pot; the Hebrew makes no mention of the metal.

⁶ *The rod of Aaron.*] Numb. xvii. 1—10. No mention is made either of the rod of Aaron or the pot of manna being deposited in the ark, so that some suppose that *εν η* only signifies *being near the ark*; it seems to be generally believed that they were at first deposited in the ark, but by some accident or other were lost before the time of Solomon, when it is expressly said, that nothing remained in the ark but the two tables of stone, 1 Kings viii. 9, 2 Chron. v. 10.

⁷ *The tables of the covenant.*] It was expressly ordered that the tablets of stone containing the ten commandments should be deposited in the ark, Exod. xxv. 16, xl. 20.

⁸ *The cherubim.*] Exod. xxv. 17—22, xxxvii. 6—9. Moses gives no description of the cherubim; they were probably similar to the figures in Ezekiel's vision, Ezek. i. 4—14, and were hieroglyphical representations of universal worship.

⁹ *The mercy-seat.*] *ιλαστηριον*. This is described Exod. xxv. 21, 22. Here the divine mercy as it were, took its stand, and from the cloud of glory oracles were delivered. In allusion to this Jesus is called a mercy-seat, Rom. iii. 25; which our translators improperly render a propitiation, instead of a propitiatory.

was within the tabernacle, and separated the holy from the most holy place. Ch. IX.
Ver. 5. Behind this veil, and within this sacred repository, was placed the golden censer, with which the high-priest officiated when he entered into the most holy place on the day of atonement. Also, that precious chest which, being made of wood, was wholly overlaid with gold; and which, from the use to which it was applied, was justly denominated the ark of the covenant; which originally contained that golden pot which Moses was required to fill with manna, that the children of Israel, through all their generations, might possess an ocular and sensible proof of the miraculous manner in which their ancestors had been supported in the wilderness. It also contained the rod of Aaron, which miraculously budded, blossomed, and bore fruit, as an attestation of the will of God to select that family in preference to all others, to exercise the priestly office. The two tables of stone, on which the ten commandments, the observance of which was the essential condition of the promised blessing, were engraved by the finger of God himself, were also deposited in the ark, and remained there till the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar; though the vessel of manna and the rod of Aaron were lost before the building of Solomon's temple. The golden lid of this holy chest was, as you must remember, called the mercy-seat; for upon this the shechinah, or cloud of glory, rested, which was the symbol of the divine presence; and from which, proceeded those oracles which were intended for the instruction, consolation, and encouragement, of the people of God. Over this chest were placed the cherubim, which were symbolical figures in a worshiping posture, whose spreading wings overshadowed the mercy-seat, and which represented the whole creation as offering its homage to the supreme Being. I have much to say concerning the symbolical use of all these articles, and might easily show, as in the case of Melchisedec, that each of them was typical of something more truly great and splendid under the Christian dispensation: but for the present I forbear, intending to limit myself to the subject of priests and sacrifices, and to show the analogy between the consecration of things and persons under the law by the blood of animal victims, and under the gospel by the blood of Jesus.

Thus we see that it was the main design of this writer to conciliate the minds of the believing Hebrews, by drawing an analogy between the old dispensation and the new; and by representing every thing great and splendid in the Mosaic ritual, as typical of something still more great and more

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Ver. 5.

splendid in the spiritual service of the heavenly tabernacle, in which Jesus is supposed to officiate. He conducts his allegory with much ingenuity; and he plainly insinuates that it was in his power to have carried the allusion much further; as indeed he easily might; for to such kind of writing there is no limit, but a writer's own fancy or discretion. And all this might answer a very good purpose to the simple and prejudiced Hebrews: but when Christians interpret literally what the author meant figuratively; and when they apply such observations to all Christians, in all ages, which were intended and adapted only to a particular description of Christians in the primitive age, they totally mistake and pervert the writer's meaning; and upon this mistake they erect a fabric of absurd and mischievous opinions, which they exhibit to the world in lieu of the plain, simple and majestic structure of Christian truth; and thus, by powerfully impressing the imagination, they oft divert the attention of the multitude from the pure and spiritual worship of the living and the true God.

2. The writer proceeds to describe the different offices which were performed in the holy and in the most holy place, ver. 6, 7.

6. *These things therefore being thus prepared, the priests enter¹ continually*
7. *into the first tabernacle, performing the services of God; but into the second the high-priest alone entereth once every year, not without blood, which he offereth for the sins of ignorance, of himself, and of the people².*

The tabernacle of Moses having been thus constructed and divided into two parts, a ritual was established for each, which in substance is observed in your temple at Jerusalem even to the present day. It is the custom for the inferior priests to go every day into the holy place to light the lamps, to offer the morning and the evening sacrifice, and to perform the stated rites

¹ *The priests enter.*] Archbishop Newcome justly observes, that "the present tense is here used, and *offereth* in the next verse, because the temple was then standing."

² *The sins of ignorance.*] The ritual for the day of atonement is prescribed Lev. xvi. The high-priest is required to sprinkle the blood of a young bullock for himself, and of a kid for the people. This is called the *atonement*, not because the anger of God was supposed to be appeased by the substitution of the blood of the victim for that of the offender, for in the first place it was only for sins of ignorance that this sacrifice was appointed; and secondly, the high-priest is said to make atonement for the altar and for the sanctuary, and to reconcile the holy place and the tabernacle, as well as to atone for the priests and to reconcile the people, ver. 17, 18, 20, 33. Hence it follows, that the business of the day was only to reconsecrate things or persons which had been accidentally polluted; and in general, to renew the covenant which might have been, and probably had been, in the case of every individual inadvertently violated.

of divine worship : but into the holy of holies, within the veil, no one is ever permitted to enter but the high-priest, and even he, only one day in the year, the day of general atonement, when he is required to sprinkle the blood of a bullock for himself, and of a goat for the people, before the mercy-seat ; as a solemn form of renewing the covenant with God, if it had been inadvertently violated, either by the priest or the people.

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Ver. 7.

In order to understand the meaning of the writer in this passage, it is necessary to remember that there were various incidents by which a person became ceremonially polluted, and thereby excluded for a time from the benefit of the Mosaic covenant, till he had purified and reinstated himself by certain prescribed ablutions and sacrifices. When the cause of pollution was known, the rite of readmission was determined, as in the case of touching a dead body : but incidental pollutions were no doubt frequently contracted unawares, and by these sins of ignorance a person was inadvertently excluded from the covenant. For such cases, and for these *alone*, were the sacrifices of the day of atonement provided. And by the ceremony of the sprinkling of the blood of the victims on that day, the priests and the people, who, by inadvertent acts, or unknown circumstances, might have become ceremonially polluted and profane, now became ceremonially pure and holy ; the outlawry, if I may so express it, was reversed ; and the whole people, on this solemn occasion, annually renewed their covenant with Jehovah. From this brief state of the case, every one may see how little foundation there is for the strange opinion that the blood of the victim was offered to appease the wrath of God, or the life of the sacrifice as a substitute for that of the offender.

3. The mystical signification of this ritual was, that the Mosaic œconomy left its votaries in a very imperfect state, ver. 8—10.

Whereby the holy spirit signified³, that the way into the holy of holies is not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle is standing⁴, which

8.

9.

³ *The holy spirit signified.*] This writer does not himself pretend to inspiration, and he produces no kind of evidence to prove that any such mystical meaning was intended by the Deity in the tabernacle service as he has annexed to it. It can therefore only be considered as the private opinion of this unknown writer ; who perhaps, after all, meant nothing more than that the tabernacle service, spiritually understood, might be considered as teaching this lesson.

⁴ *While the first tabernacle is standing.*] See Newcome. "The first tabernacle here signifies the court of the priests, or the holy place. See ver. 2, 6. And this sense best suits the author's argument. For as that court led to the holy of holies, and was accessible to none but

- Ch. IX. *is a figure of the present time*¹, in which tabernacle are offered both gifts
 Ver. 9. *and sacrifices, which cannot, as to his conscience*², make perfect him that
 10. *worshipeth God only with meat and drink offerings*³ and divers washings,
 which are *carnal ordinances*⁴ appointed⁵ until the time of reformation⁶.

Now, my brethren, all this ceremonial which I have described has a mystical meaning, which I will explain to you in its proper order, and thereby convince you of the propriety and expedience of the sufferings of the Messiah. In the first place, the sanctuary, which is before the veil where the ordinary priests officiated, is a symbol of the present, I mean the Mosaic dispensation: and as the veil was never removed while the priests were officiating in the holy place, this shows that the new and better dispensation, that of the Messiah, will never take place till the old Mosaic covenant is abrogated. And this is the more evident, as the sacrifices and ablutions, the meat and drink offerings, which are prescribed by the law for the purification of ceremonial pollutions and sins of ignorance, do not extend to voluntary offences, and are nothing more than external rites to answer a temporary purpose; and which may with propriety be laid aside when the season of reformation comes, and a new and spiritual dispensation is introduced.

4. The office of the high-priest, on the day of atonement, is a mysti-

the priests, who were themselves prohibited from entering the most holy place, it is plain that as long as this remained in its ancient state and use, the way into the holiest was not then manifest." Peirce.

¹ *A figure of the present time.*] εἰς τὸν καιρὸν. In Valesius's readings it is τὸ καιρὸς παραβολῆς. "a type or imperfect delineation of the advantages of the present time, now Christ is come." Peirce. But surely, the state of the first tabernacle, in which the way to the holiest was not yet manifest, was rather a sketch of the times under the law, which is here called the *present time*, as the temple was then standing, and its service conducted in the usual manner. Compare ver. 11.

² *As to his conscience.*] No sacrifices were appointed for voluntary transgressions, Psalm l. 8—14, li. 16, 17. The sacrifices on the day of atonement were expressly appointed for sins of ignorance, ver. 7.

³ *With meat and drink offerings.*] Gr. *with meats and drinks*. ἐπὶ is used for ἐν. This sense is suggested by Peirce; who justly observes, that "nothing can be more to the author's purpose."

⁴ *Carnal ordinances.*] Peirce adopts the Alexandrine reading, δικαιώματα, and supplies the words, ἀτινά ην "which were carnal ordinances laid on the Jews."

⁵ *Ordinances appointed.*] An expression very similar to many in Paul's epistles. "The author brings in this clause to disparage the ordinances upon which the Hebrews set so high a value." Peirce.

⁶ *Time of reformation:*] that is, the times of the Messiah, in opposition to the present time, ver. 9. "The reformation is the change that Christ made of the way and manner of serving God." Peirce.

cal representation of the office of Christ under the new dispensation, ver. Ch. IX. 11, 12.

*But Christ, the high-priest of blessings which were to be*⁷, *being come*⁸, Ver. 11. *entered once for all, not indeed with the blood of goats and calves, but with* 12. *his own blood, into the most holy place, through that greater and more perfect tabernacle*⁹, *not made with hands, that is, not of the same workmanship, having obtained everlasting redemption*¹⁰.

As the high-priest entered once every year into the holy of holies, within the veil, to renew the covenant with God for all the chosen people by the blood of animal victims, so Jesus, the Messiah, the high-priest of the new dispensation, the dispenser of its promised blessings, foretold by the prophets, has also entered into the most holy place, to ratify with blood that better covenant into which his disciples are now initiated. But the office of our great high-priest far transcends that of the priests of the line of Aaron in a variety of important particulars. In the first place, the Jewish high-priest enters into the most holy place one day only in the year, but our high-priest is entered into his sanctuary to dwell for ever there. Again, The high-priest of the house of Aaron carried in with him the blood of a bullock and of a goat, by the sprinkling of which he purified the ceremonially unclean; but Jesus is gone in with his own blood to ratify the new covenant, by which all who believe are sanctified and consecrated. Further, the Jewish high-priest performed his ministrations in an earthly sanctuary, an imperfect copy of a celestial model, but the Christian high-priest performs his office in that very tabernacle, that celestial structure, of which that of Moses was but a faint resemblance. Lastly, The Jewish high-priest performed his office every year, and was obliged annually to repeat the sacrifices for annual transgressions

⁷ *Blessings which were to be.*] των μελλοντων αγαθων. So Wakefield. *i. e.* blessings of the future age; the times of the Messiah; the Father of the age to come. Isaiah ix. 6. "It has respect, not so much to the heavenly felicity, as to the advantages we have by Christ in this present world." Peirce. The high-priest of future blessings seems to be opposed to the time present, ver. 9.

⁸ *Being come.*] παραγενομενος is to be taken in construction with εισηλθεν. "being come to the most holy place, he hath entered in. See Acts xxiii. 16." Peirce.

⁹ *Through that greater and more perfect tabernacle.*] He does not officiate in the earthly sanctuary, but in that celestial tabernacle which was shown to Moses in the Mount, and which was the model of that which he erected. And even here he does not officiate in the outer court, the court of the priests, but passing through, he enters the holy of holies. This celestial tabernacle is not, like that of Moses, made by human artists, nor of earthly kind, being of heavenly construction, and the model of the Mosaic.

¹⁰ *Everlasting redemption.*] "not a yearly, but everlasting redemption." Newcome. From the yoke and the curses of the law. It is not to be forgotten that the sins which were propitiated on the day of atonement were only sins of ignorance of the past year.

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Ver. 12.

of inadvertence. But the covenant ratified by the Christian high-priest is irrevocable; and they who believe in Jesus are redeemed for ever from the bondage of the law, and from the yoke of idolatry, so that while they continue to believe they cannot exclude themselves from the external blessings and privileges of the gospel by any involuntary transgressions of ceremonial institutions.

5. It is reasonable to expect that the blood of the Messiah would be efficacious to a far more valuable purpose than that of animal victims, ver. 13, 14.

13. *For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled*
14. *on the unclean*¹, *sanctify to the purification of the flesh*², *how much more*
*will the blood of Christ*³, *who by the holy spirit*⁴ *offered himself spotless*
*to God, purify your conscience from dead works*⁵, *that ye may serve the*
living God?

¹ *Sprinkled on the unclean.*] The precepts concerning this rite are contained in Numb. xix. It is observable here that ceremonial pollution is produced, not only by actions innocent, necessary, and often unavoidable, such as touching and burying the dead, but by circumstances wholly involuntary and accidental, such as touching the bone of a dead man, or being in a tent when a person died, ver. 13, 14, and it extended even to inanimate things, to open vessels, &c. ver. 15. The expiations of the law only cleansed ceremonial pollutions.

² *Purification of the flesh.*] "legal impurities debarred the Jews an attendance on the public service; from these they were freed by the sacrifices, washings, and sprinklings appointed by the Mosaic law, and so became qualified again for public worship. This our author speaks of under the notion of sanctification." Peirce. Consisting so much in washing and sprinkling, they are properly enough called *purifications of the flesh*. But if these rites were neglected, the offender was cut off from the congregation of Israel, i. e. excommunicated, forfeited his rights and privileges as a citizen. Numb. xix. 12, 13, 20. See Sykes.

³ *The blood of Christ.*] of the Christ, the Messiah.

⁴ *The holy spirit.*] This is the reading of the Clermont and some other MSS. and of the Coptic, Vulgate, and other versions. It is wanting in the Æthiopic. The received text, with the Alexandrine and other copies, and the Syriac and other versions, reads αιωνιος, *eternal*, or *everlasting*; an epithet not usually applied to the spirit, but upon which many build an argument (very precarious) for the personality and godhead of the third person in the trinity. Mr. Peirce understands it as strangely "of the Logos, or divine nature of our Lord."

⁵ *Dead works.*] νεκρων εργαων this is a phrase peculiar to this author, and occurs only here and in ch. vi. 1, where *repentance from dead works* is represented as one of the first principles of the Christian doctrine, and immediately connected with *faith in God*; as in this case the purification of the conscience from *dead works* is the preliminary to the *service* or worship, λατρευειν, of the living God.

The phrase not being defined by the writer, it becomes necessary to discover his meaning in the best manner we are able.

The most common interpretation of the passage is this: that as the blood of bulls and goats purified the worshiper from ceremonial offences, so the blood of Christ purifies the conscience from moral guilt, either by atoning for sin, according to some, or, as others explain it, by the merit of his obedience; or finally, by affording an assurance of pardon, or exhibiting a motive to virtue. None of these explanations appears to be satisfactory.

The main design of the author of this epistle is to reconcile the believing but wavering He-

Observe, my brethren, the course and the conclusiveness of the argument which I am pursuing. Inadvertent acts, of which the performer is often unconscious, sometimes occasion ceremonial pollution, and place men in an unholy and uncovenanted state: but such are restored to the privileges of the Mosaic covenant by the sacrifices and lustrations of the day of atonement, and by other rites, which were not meant as compensations for transgression, but merely as solemn forms of readmission into the congregation of Israel, and restoration to public worship. How reasonable then is it to

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Ver. 14.

brews to the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, and to the abolition of the ceremonial law, two things as offensive as can well be imagined; which, however, he manages with great delicacy and ingenuity.

He never mentions the crucifixion of Jesus, and its attendant circumstances of degradation; but with consummate address he represents the death of the Messiah as his own voluntary act, under the character of the high-priest of the celestial tabernacle, performing the most solemn and sacred duty of his office; entering into the celestial holy of holies on the great day of expiation, once for all offering his own blood, and remaining for ever in the celestial sanctuary to intercede, that is, to perform all priestly offices for his people.

The efficacy of the service of the Levitical high-priest in the earthly sanctuary is described as sanctifying to the purification of the flesh. The sacrifices were expressly offered for sins of ignorance, ch. viii. 7; and they reinstated priest and people in that covenant from which they had excluded themselves by inadvertent and involuntary violations of the ceremonial law.

But the blood of Christ, that spotless and voluntary victim, answered a far superior purpose; it purified the conscience from dead works 'to serve the living and true God.'

The expiations of the law were limited to sins of ignorance; the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ extended to the purification of the conscience, and therefore to voluntary acts.

These acts are described as *dead works*; repentance, or a change of mind with respect to which, is represented as one of the first principles of the Christian faith, ch. vii. 1: comp. xii. 17. The writer, as a Hebrew, is addressing Hebrews; and this change of mind with respect to dead works, we are led by the context to understand as a renunciation of the works of the law, as the ground of justification.

The works of the ceremonial law are with great propriety called *dead works*; they are dead, as being of no moral benefit either to the agent or to others; and they are dead, as the law passes an irrevocable sentence of death upon the wilful transgressor; they are works which leave the offender under a sentence of legal condemnation.

The blood of Christ purifies the conscience from *dead works*. The voluntary renunciation of the law as a ground of justification, which is the first requisition of the gospel, was the greatest offence against the law which a Hebrew could commit. But the offering of the blood of Christ in the celestial sanctuary purified the conscience from this offence; it obtained the pardon of the transgressor; it protected him from the sentence of the law; and set him at liberty to worship the living and true God, agreeably to the liberal and spiritual dispensation of the gospel.

All that the writer really means is, that the Mosaic dispensation being terminated by the death of Christ, who was the messenger of heaven to introduce the new and merciful dispensation of the gospel, all who believe are now released from the obligations of the ceremonial law, and are at liberty to worship God without restraint, agreeably to the mild and liberal spirit of the gospel.

But this doctrine, so offensive in its simple form to the prejudices of the Hebrews, the author has with great ingenuity dressed up in such a manner as would best meet the conceptions of his countrymen, and would greatly abate, if not altogether overrule, their objections to the obnoxious doctrines of a suffering Messiah and an abrogated law.

A similar instance of ingenuity in accommodating an unpalatable doctrine to the prejudices of his readers occurs ch. ii. 14, 15; where he describes the abolition of the law by the destruction of the devil, or the accusing power, through the death of Christ.

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Ver. 14.

expect that a covenant ratified with the blood, not of animal victims, but of Jesus himself, the true Messiah, who by express divine direction submitted for this purpose as an innocent victim to a violent death, should as far excel the Mosaic œconomy, in the extent and value of its blessings, as in the mode of its confirmation. Such is the fact. The law made no provision for voluntary transgression: the soul that sinned presumptuously was condemned to death: but the blood of Christ, that spotless victim, extends its purifying influence to a voluntary act which, in the eye of the law, would be the greatest of offences, and upon which it would denounce its severest anathemas. I mean the absolute and total rejection of all its ceremonial institutions as the ground of justification, and as essential to our admission into the community of the people of God.

This renunciation of the unprofitable works of the law, the gospel, which requires faith alone as the ground of justification, absolutely demands; and from the condemning sentence of the law the believer is protected by the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin, and which, by ratifying the new covenant, cancels the obligation of the old; and by putting an end to the reign of the law, annihilates both its right to command and its authority to condemn; and sets the believer at liberty to worship the living God with a spiritual service.

IV.

The writer shows that a new and better covenant required to be ratified by the blood of a new and nobler victim. Ch. ix. 15—24.

1. He states the necessity of introducing a new and a better covenant, ver. 15.

15. *And for this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant¹, that death having taken place for the redemption² of transgressions against the first covenant, they who are invited might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

¹ *The mediator of a new covenant.*] διαθηκης καινης in the public version, a new testament, or will. But it is allowed by the most judicious critics that the context does not require this sudden change and unusual sense of the word διαθηκη. See Whitby, Peirce, Sykes, Doddridge, Wakefield, Newcome, &c.

The mediator: "that is, the person by whom it is transacted and confirmed." Newcome.

² *Death having taken place for the redemption.*] *Dead works*, that is, the law of works, being renounced, as a first principle under the gospel, the believer loses his standing in the first covenant, and is exposed to its anathemas. Hence the necessity of a new covenant of which Christ is the mediator, sanctioned by death, viz. the death of the mediator himself, as the victim; by the blood of which, all who had desecrated themselves by abandoning the old covenant, are re-

The law of works, as a ground of justification, being thus voluntarily abdicated, as the first step towards faith in the gospel, the believer is thereby deprived of all benefit from the first covenant, which he has thus voluntarily discarded, and has exposed himself to all its anathemas. Hence arises the necessity of a new covenant to protect believers from the curses of the old: and this, in fact, is the gracious errand upon which Christ is sent. He is the mediator of a new covenant, appointed to transact business between the covenanting parties, to offer the terms, and to announce the promise: and moreover, as the victim by whose death the covenant is ratified, and by whose blood believers are as it were sprinkled and purified, he redeems and delivers them from the anathemas of the obsolete and superseded law, and reconsecrates them as the peculiar people of God under the new covenant, in a far better state than under the old dispensation: the promises of the former covenant being limited to an earthly and temporal, but those of the new being extended to a spiritual and everlasting inheritance.

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Ver. 15.

2. This new covenant required the death of a suitable victim to ratify and confirm it, ver. 16, 17.

For where a covenant exists, the death of that by which the covenant is confirmed³ must be produced⁴. For a covenant is confirmed over dead victims, and is of no force at all while that by which it is confirmed liveth.

16.
17.

I have mentioned death, in connexion with the new covenant; for it is a usual thing to ratify covenants between man and man, as well as between God and man, with the blood of a victim offered upon the occasion. And where this is the rite agreed upon by the contracting parties for this purpose, the covenant has plainly no validity till the death of the victim is sa-

consecrated and redeemed, or delivered from the curse, by the new; and so having been invited, and having accepted the gospel call, they become heirs of immortal life.

This seems to be the true meaning of the author in this passage; and it makes the sense of the context clear and obvious.

³ *By which the covenant is confirmed.*] ὁ διαθεμενος. "whilst that which establishes the covenant is alive." Wakefield. See Whitby and Doddridge on the text. διαθεμενος properly signifies either a testator, or a covenanter. But the writer is not treating of a testament, but a covenant; and covenants, if not uniformly, were frequently ratified in the blood of victims. In this case Christ, who is the mediator of the covenant, is himself the victim in whose blood it is both confirmed and consecrated; and if the word is taken in this sense, though a very unusual one, it gives a clear and pertinent meaning to a passage which is otherwise very obscure.

⁴ *Be produced.*] φερεσθαι, a forensic term. "must be produced or producible, or else the whole transaction may be deemed not obligatory." Sykes.

Archbishop Newcome thinks that the 17th verse "has the appearance of an interpolation from one who supposed that διαθηκη signified a testament or will."

Ch. IX. tisfactorily authenticated. For till the victim is slain, the covenant is without
Ver. 17. force, and either party is at liberty to recede from his engagement.

3. Agreeably to this state of things, the first covenant was ratified in blood; and every person and every thing was consecrated with blood, ver. 18—22.

18. *Wherefore, even the first covenant was not confirmed¹ without blood.*
19. *For after every commandment of the law had been spoken by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of the calves and goats, with water and scarlet*
20. *wool and hyssop, and sprinkled the book itself and all the people, saying,*
21. *This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined you. And he sprinkled with blood in the same manner the tabernacle likewise, and all*
22. *the vessels of the ministry. And under the law, almost all things are purified with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*

With respect to the use of blood, there is a great analogy between the first covenant and the second. After the ten commandments had been delivered with an audible voice from mount Sinai, the assembled congregation gave their explicit and solemn assent to them, and offered sacrifices of oxen to the Lord; and Moses sprinkled half the blood upon the altar, and the other half on the people, and announced it as the blood of the covenant which God had made with them, by which they were separated from the idolatrous world and consecrated to God: Exod. xxiv. 3—8. Upon other occasions other rites of purification were instituted; some by water, and some by fire, but very seldom without the shedding and sprinkling of blood. In

¹ *Was not confirmed.*] ἐγχεκαινισαί. “dedicated.” Newcome. “solemnized.” Wakefield. Archbishop Newcome observes, that “the original word, *dedicated*, is used metaphorically for *confirmed*, because the blood of victims was shed at the dedications of holy things, as at the ratifications of covenants, Numb. vii. 88, 1 Kings viii. 62, 63.” It is in both these senses that the efficacy of the blood of Jesus is represented by this writer; it confirms the new covenant, and it sanctifies believers; being, as it were, sprinkled upon them, it separates them from the unbelieving world as effectually as the ceremonial purifications of the first covenant.

The account of the first solemn ratification of the covenant is contained Exod. xxiv. 6—8. No mention is made of the goats, the water, the scarlet wool, or the hyssop; but Dr. Sykes observes, that “they might possibly be used during the ceremony of sprinkling.” Nor is any mention made of sprinkling the book; which, however, is not improbable. In Lev. viii. there is an account of the consecration of the tabernacle and its furniture, but it is not said they were sprinkled with blood; they were sanctified by the anointing oil. “Though many things were purified with blood, some were purified with water alone, Exod. xix. 10, Lev. xvi. 28. Others by the water of separation, Numb. xix. 9, &c. Others were cleansed by fire, Numb. xxxi. 22, 23.” Sykes.

It is plain that the writer did not mean to be literally correct.

this way the children of Israel were first separated, or consecrated, as a holy and peculiar people; and in this sense the sins of their heathen state are said to be remitted. Inanimate things likewise are *consecrated*: that is, set apart from a common to a holy purpose, by being sprinkled with blood; and being antecedently in a ceremonially unholy state, the law speaks of atonement being made for them, as though they had been actually sinners: and under the law there is no remission of offence, either in animate or inanimate beings; that is, there is no translation of them from a common to a sacred use, without the blood of the animal victim. See Lev. xvi. 18—20, 33.

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Ver. 22.

Observe here, 1. That the account which this writer gives of the ceremony of sprinkling with blood as a ratification of the covenant and a rite of purification, does not agree in all its particulars with the narration of that fact in Exod. xxiv., where no mention is made, either of the blood of goats or of water, or of scarlet wool, or of hyssop; but only that Moses sprinkled the people, probably a few who stood near him, and who were representatives of the rest, with the blood of bullocks or calves. The disagreement is of no consequence, if inspiration is out of the question: it might be owing to a slip of memory, or it might be a tradition of the Jews. Neither does Moses mention the sprinkling of the book of the law; the circumstance, however, is not improbable, but to us is very immaterial.

2. It is of more importance to remark, that the tabernacle, the vessels of the service, and other inanimate things, are here represented as purified with blood; and of these it is said, that without shedding of blood there was no remission. In exact conformity to this, the priest is said, Lev. xvi. 18—23, by sprinkling of blood to make atonement for the altar, and to reconcile the holy place, the altar, and the tabernacle, as well as the priests and the congregation, ver. 33.

Inanimate beings are thus represented as sinners which need remission, atonement, and reconciliation, by the sprinkling of blood. The meaning is obvious. Previously to the lustration, they were in a profane and unholy state; by the application of that rite they were set apart and dedicated to the service of God.

This explains the sense in which the word *sinner* often occurs in the New Testament; and also that in which the blood of Christ is said to cleanse from sin, for it is never said to atone for it. *They* are called *sinners* who

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Ver. 22.

live neither under the Mosaic nor under the Christian covenant; and who are therefore said to be in an unholy state, how excellent soever their moral character may be. And they are called *saints*, or *holy*, who publicly profess the Christian religion, whatever be the imperfection of their moral characters. And these are purified by the blood of Christ, because his death ratified the new covenant; and his blood is in a figurative sense said to be sprinkled upon believers, to separate them from the unbelieving world to the service and worship of God.

A person who does not attend to this sense of the words *sin* and *holiness* will lose much of the meaning and spirit of the apostolic writings.

4. By parity of reason, the heavenly sanctuary and its worshipers must be consecrated with the blood of a more excellent victim, ver. 23, 24.

23. It was *therefore necessary that the copies of things in the heavens should be purified with these victims, but the heavenly things themselves with better*
24. *sacrifices than these*¹. *Therefore Christ hath not entered into a sanctuary made with hands, which is the resemblance of the true, but into heaven*² *itself, now to appear in the presence of God in our behalf.*

As, by divine appointment, it was necessary to separate the earthly tabernacle and its furniture, which were made after the celestial model, from a common to a sacred use, by sprinkling them with the blood of animal victims, it is equally necessary that the sanctuary in heaven, where our great high-priest officiates, should be consecrated for a similar purpose by the blood of a far more excellent victim, that is, of Christ himself: and for this end Christ has actually entered, not into the earthly sanctuary, but into that heavenly tabernacle which is the model of that made by Moses, and in this most holy and glorious place he produces his own blood before the throne

¹ *The heavenly things.*] Some have supposed that the writer means to insinuate, that heaven itself would be polluted by the presence of such sinful creatures as we are, if not previously purified by the blood of Jesus. See Doddridge. But this is widely distant from the author's view. He argues, that as the earthly tabernacle and its worshipers were purified by the blood of animal victims, so the heavenly tabernacle and its worshipers, *i. e.* the great body of believers, are to be purified and set apart by the blood of a better victim, *viz.* of Christ.

² *Into heaven itself.*] *i. e.* into the celestial tabernacle which was shown to Moses in the Mount.

It is obvious to the attentive reader how promiscuously this author uses the expressions, *dedicated*, ver. 18, *purified*, *remitted*, ver. 22, as expressions of the same meaning, namely, *consecrated to God*: set apart from the unbelieving world; which is accomplished by the figurative sprinkling of the blood of Christ, not by his making atonement or satisfaction, or bearing the divine displeasure, or the expiation of human guilt.

of God, as that by which the Christian church and all its members are as it were sprinkled, separated from the unbelieving world, and consecrated to the service of God.

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Ver. 24.

Thus the writer pleads, in order to conciliate the prejudices of the believing Hebrews, that as the actual sprinkling of the blood of the animal victims upon the worshipers and vessels of the Mosaic tabernacle was the symbol of their separation from a common to a sacred use, so the figurative sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, in the supposed celestial tabernacle, is the symbol of the separation of the worshipers in that heavenly sanctuary, that is, not saints in heaven, but the great body of Christians on earth, from the unbelieving world to the service of the true God. All this is figure and allegory accommodated to the conceptions and prejudices of the Hebrews, who were accustomed to the temple service. The great moral lesson which we learn from it is this, that Christians are, by their profession, consecrated to God, and that it is their indispensable duty to dedicate their time and all their powers to him, and to employ them in his service.

V.

The writer closes the argumentative part of the epistle by proving, at large, that it was not necessary that this illustrious victim should suffer more than once. Chap. ix. 25—x. 18.

1. He argues that the supposition of the necessity of repeating the sacrifice of the Messiah would involve a palpable and offensive absurdity, ver. 25, 26.

Nor indeed was it necessary³ that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the most holy place⁴ every year with other blood⁵ (for then he must have suffered often⁶ since the foundation of the

³ *Nor was it necessary.*] See Peirce and Newcome; who supply the ellipsis from ver. 23, though Peirce acknowledges the construction to be unusual. "To complete the sense, bring down *αναρχη* from ver. 23, and insert it after *εδε*." Owen *apud* Bowyer.

⁴ *The most holy place.*] *ἁγία*, the holy of holies. See Newcome.

⁵ *With other blood.*] *i. e.* with the blood of an animal victim; not, like Jesus, with his own blood.

⁶ *He must have suffered often.*] The writer reduces to an absurdity the supposition that the repetition of the Messiah's sacrifice was as necessary as the repetition of the high-priest's: *q. d.* You might as well say, that the Messiah's mission ought to have been as early as the age of Aaron, or even of Adam; and then you would have had as many suffering Messiahs as you had annual expiatory sacrifices; than which no supposition can be more revolting or absurd. No,

Ch. IX. world) ; but now he hath been manifested once, at the conclusion of the
Ver. 26. ages¹, to remove sin², by the sacrifice of himself.

Nor let it be thought, my brethren, that according to this way of stating the necessity and advantage of the voluntary suffering of the Messiah, it would be requisite for that illustrious victim to offer himself annually, as the high-priest offered his animal sacrifices on the day of atonement. This would indeed be a most unworthy thought : and, in fact, it might with equal reason be supposed that the annual sacrifice of a Messiah had been necessary from the beginning of time ; than which nothing can be more extravagant or more revolting. But that is not our doctrine. What we teach is, that the great Messiah, the chief of all the prophets and messengers of God, has been revealed now, at last, at the conclusion of the Mosaic dispensation, by the voluntary sacrifice of himself once for all, to put an end at once, and for ever, not only to those sins of ignorance, which required annual expiation, but to those voluntary transgressions of the ceremonial law for which their sacrifices made no provision. And this he hath done by the utter and entire abolition of the law of ceremonies itself, if not as a rule of practice, yet altogether as a ground of justification. We are now no longer under the law, but under grace.

2. The frequent repetition of the death of the Messiah would be inconsistent with his nature and condition as a human being : his return, therefore, is not to be expected till his final appearance, ver. 27, 28.

27. *And as it is appointed unto men³ to die once, and after this the judge-*
28. *ment, so Christ also having been offered once to bear away the sin⁴ of*

this is not the constitution which God hath ordained : he hath sent forth the Messiah once for all, at the fittest season, at the close of the Mosaic dispensation, to put an end to sin, by putting an end to the covenant of rites and ceremonies, which was the great cause of offence, by offering himself a voluntary victim, to seal and ratify with his own blood that new dispensation by which the old covenant is superseded and abolished.

It is evident all along that he is addressing the Hebrews upon their own principles, labouring to reconcile them to the offensive doctrine of a crucified Messiah and an abrogated law, without the least allusion to a supposed atonement for the moral offences of mankind.

¹ *At the conclusion of the ages.]* At the end of the Mosaic dispensation. See Peirce, Mede, Doddridge, Wakefield. Compare ch. i. 2.

² *To remove sin :]* that is, the law which is the strength of sin ; which first gives occasion to sin, and then condemns it without mercy. See Rom. vii.

³ *Appointed unto men.]* Mr. Peirce observes, that “ the author had several times asserted, that Christ was made like to us in all things ; and this consideration he seems to allege in this place in order to clear what he says of Christ’s only dying once. By dying once, he submits to the condition they were in for whom he died ; but being freed from death, he has no more occasion than they to die any more.”

⁴ *To bear away sin.]* “ The Greek phrase is only used here and 1 Pet. ii. 24.” Archbishop

*many*⁵, to those who are waiting for him, will appear a second time, without *sin*⁶, unto salvation.

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Ver. 28.

You remember, my brethren, that in the former part of this epistle I represented to you that our great teacher and master was, not a being of a different species, and of superior rank, but a man like ourselves, in all respects like other men. Now, it would be greatly inconsistent with the state and condition of a human being to be repeatedly subject to the stroke of death: nor is any thing of this kind intended in his case. But as it is the general lot of the children of Adam to resign their breath at the time appointed by God; and after this, in some future period, to rise again, and to be fixed in a state of happiness or misery correspondent to their respective characters, and to die no more; so Jesus, the Messiah, has died once, and will also appear again. He died a voluntary sacrifice for all mankind, to set aside all legal ceremonial disqualifications, and to open a way for the admission of all believers, without distinction, to the blessings of the new covenant. But, as he is now gone into the celestial sanctuary, as our high-priest, to present his offered blood, so, like the high-priest of the Mosaic institute, who, at the close of the solemn rites of the day of atonement, appeared to

Newcome; who observes, that "some suppose an allusion to the scape-goat Lev. xvi. 20—22." See also Macknight; who translates it, *to carry away*. But Jesus is compared to the victim which was sacrificed, not to that which was suffered to escape. To take away sin, therefore, is the same as to remove or abolish it, ver. 26: that is, by the figurative sprinkling of his blood all sin or legal disqualification was removed. "*ἀναφέρω*, *sursum fero—sacrificium offero—aufero, tollo.*" Schleusner.

⁵ *Many*:] *i. e.* all mankind, Jew or Gentile; there is no legal impediment to prevent any who are willing from entering into this covenant. For this extensive application of the word *many*, see Rom. v. 19, Matt. xxvi. 28. "to bear away the sins of all." Wakefield.

⁶ *Without sin*.] *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*, *without a sin-offering*. See 2 Cor. v. 21. Newcome. The writer continues the same allusion. Christ, the high-priest of the new dispensation, having offered himself a sacrifice for sin, enters into the celestial holy of holies with his own blood, like the high-priest on the day of atonement into the earthly sanctuary with the blood of his animal victims. And, like the Jewish high-priest, he will at the appointed time appear again: not, however, till the consummation of all things, when he shall come to accomplish the hopes of those who have placed their confidence in him. He will then appear, not like the Levitical high-priest, to return again into the sanctuary at the stated season with the same victims; nor, as he himself once entered, to put an end to sin by the sacrifice of himself. He will have done with sin altogether. And as the high-priest issues from the holy of holies, after having finished the services of the day of atonement, in his golden dress, announcing pardon and reconciliation, and commanding the silver trumpets of the Jubilee to sound, so Christ will appear in robes of majesty and glory, to announce that the reign of sin and death is for ever closed; that the era of life, and joy, and everlasting triumph is begun; and that those who by patient continuance in well doing, have been seeking for glory, honour, and immortality, shall now find all the promises fulfilled, all their expectations exceeded, and that they have not in vain trusted to a merciful and faithful Creator. This beautiful allusion to the return of the high-priest from the sanctuary on the day of atonement in his golden dress, to announce the Jubilee, is borrowed by Dr. Doddridge from Limborch.

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Ver. 28.

the people in the glory of his magnificent attire to announce their reinstatement in the covenant with God, and at the proper season to proclaim the year of jubilee; in the same manner will our exalted high-priest in due season return again, not in the mean and humble form in which he appeared before, when he came to offer a sacrifice for his own purification and that of his followers, but he will appear in his own and his Father's glory to close the dispensations of divine providence, to rescue his faithful disciples from the power of the grave, to put them into possession of the kingdom prepared for them, to fulfill every promise, and to exceed every expectation and every hope.

3. The Jewish scriptures foretell one great efficacious sacrifice, which should supersede all the inefficient sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual, ver. 1—10.

1.) If the legal sacrifices had been of sufficient value and efficacy, they would have ceased long ago, ver. 1—3.

Ch. X.
Ver. 1.

- Wherefore*¹, the law having a shadow of future good things², and not the originals³ themselves, is by no means able, with the same sacrifices which are offered every year, to make those who present themselves⁴ perfect⁵ for ever⁶. For then these offerings would have ceased⁷; because the worshipers being once purified would have had no more consciousness of sin; whereas in those sacrifices there is a yearly acknowledgement of sin.

I have another argument to advance, to satisfy you that the Messiah need not to die more than once: it is derived from the representations of the holy

¹ *Wherefore.*] γὰρ, for, the reason of the preceding assertion. See Newcome. Or, according to Macknight, *wherefore*, introducing an inference: see ver. 4. Perhaps moreover, introducing a collateral argument. See Peirce.

² *Future good things.*] “i. e. the kingdom of glory in heaven.” Newcome. See also Peirce and Sykes. More probably the blessings of the dispensation of the Messiah. Col. ii. 17.

³ *The originals.*] So εἰκων in this connexion must be understood. See Peirce. The tabernacle shown to Moses in the Mount, in which Jesus is represented as now officiating. “Εἰκων, res ac veritas: ipsa rerum substantia.” Rosenmuller.

⁴ *Who present themselves.*] τῶν προσερχομένων. See Wakefield. “The same as λατρευόντας, the worshipers, in the next verse.” Peirce.

⁵ *Perfect.*] τελειῶς i. e. consecrated, ceremonially holy. See ch. vii. 11, 19, 28, ix. 9. Mr. Peirce and others erroneously interpret it as signifying *entirely free from guilt*: forgetting that the writer is here treating of ceremonial impurity only.

⁶ *For ever.*] εἰς τὸ διηνεκές. See ver. 14. Wakefield, Newcome. This is undoubtedly the true arrangement, though commonly joined with the preceding clause: v. g. year after year continually.

⁷ *Would have ceased.*] See Wakefield. The Syriac, Vulgate, and Æthiopic versions want the negative particle; which, being retained in the common copies, makes it necessary to read the sentence with an interrogation: “Would they not have ceased to be offered?”

and prophetic scriptures. I have already observed that the Mosaic tabernacle and its costly furniture were but a faint resemblance of that far more splendid sanctuary which Moses saw, and in which it was intended that our great high-priest should officiate. It could not therefore be supposed that the annual sacrifices offered by the appointment of Moses, on the day of atonement, should be a permanent and perpetual consecration of the worshipers. Had they been such, they would not have been repeated. For if, being once consecrated, they had been consecrated for ever, they would have known that they had been so, and would not have imagined themselves to have been in a condition which required repeated sacrifices and purifications. Whereas, in fact, the annual solemnities of the day of atonement were a perpetual memorial, that by errors and transgressions they had excluded themselves from the privileges of that covenant in which they were thus reinstated.

Ch. X.
Ver. 3.

2.) Hence the writer infers the incompetency of animal victims to effect permanent sanctification, ver. 4.

*Wherefore*⁸ it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

4.

The appointment of the annual sacrifice proves that the efficacy of those sacrifices lasted only from year to year; and that the blood of animal victims, though it answered the purpose for a limited time, could not completely purify the people, and permanently deliver them from their ceremonial and legal disqualifications.

3.) The writer, to establish his doctrine, cites a pertinent passage from the Psalms of David, ver. 5—7.

Wherefore one when he cometh into the world saith⁹, *Sacrifice and offer-*

5.

⁸ *Wherefore.*] γὰρ. In the illative sense. "Besides." Macknight. See ver. 1. The animal victims were offered yearly; therefore they could not completely remove ceremonial pollution. The writer is far from meaning to say, that though animal blood could not purify from moral evil, the blood of Jesus could. This is quite foreign to his argument.

⁹ *He saith.*] The passage cited is Psalm xl. 6—8. Archbishop Newcome remarks, that "the words of the Psalm from the LXX. version are here accommodated. A great Christian truth is expressed in them, and no reasoning from them is intended." The Psalmist is commonly understood as speaking in the person of Christ.

Dr. Sykes, however, contends that the fortieth Psalm is no prophecy of Christ, nor is it cited as such, nor is Christ the speaker in this quotation, nor is he represented as such by the author, who only cites a few verses from the Psalm, alleging the authority of David to prove, that under the Mosaic dispensation itself sacrifices were held in no estimation in comparison with the practice of virtue and obedience to the will of God. He shows that the difficulties which

Ch. X.
Ver. 6.
7.

ing thou choosest not, a body hast thou prepared for me¹: in burnt offerings and in sin offerings thou hast no complacency. Then I said, Behold I come; in the volume of the book² it is written of me to do thy will, O God.

That the comparative insignificance of these often repeated sacrifices is not unduly estimated by me, and that I am not alone in my judgement of them, is evident from the strong language of David in the fortieth psalm; in which he alludes to the power of God, in raising him from a very low condition to a situation of great dignity and importance, though surrounded with many difficulties; and expresses his firm determination to obey the will of God with all his heart, as what he knew would be far more acceptable than the most costly sacrifices he could offer. He acknowledges the interposition of God in the predictions of his advancement and success, which had been transmitted in the books of Moses, and which had been fulfilled in him. He is thankful for the means of instruction which had been afforded him, for the capacity which he possessed of executing the divine purpose,

occur in attempting to interpret the Psalm as the language of the Messiah are insurmountable. He interprets the whole, therefore, as the language of David. There is no mystery in the phrase *coming into the world*: "They are the words," says Dr. Sykes, "of one who lived many hundred years before Christ came into the world. They are the words of the Psalmist, and they agree to him. They are descriptive of the Psalmist himself, who from a low and mean condition was advanced by God's providence to be a mighty king. And he declares expressly the little worth of sacrifices, and says that the only thing which could make a man acceptable to God was the doing his will: Surely his authority was rightly urged."

¹ *A body hast thou prepared for me.*] *σωμα κατηρτισω μοι.* In the Hebrew, "mine ears hast thou opened," or *digged*, or *bored*. Supposed to be an allusion to the law which required that a servant, if he chose to bind himself to his master for life, should have his ear bored through with an awl. Exod. xxi. 6, Deut. xv. 17. Mr. Peirce prefers the reading of the LXX., from which this writer cites the passage: and by ingenious conjectures he shows in what way the Hebrew might have been corrupted; which, however, he believes to have agreed with the LXX. when the epistle was written. Peirce applies the whole fortieth Psalm to Christ, and endeavours to show that it contains nothing inconsistent with that supposition. He, with the whole stream of commentators, applies this clause to what is called the incarnation of Christ.

Newcome adopts the conjecture of Lambert Bos, that the original reading in the Greek was, *ωτια, ears*. See Bowyer. But the writer alludes to the word *σωμα*, ver. 10, which plainly shows how he read the text; and is perhaps an indication that he quotes the passage as the words of Christ, whether allusively or otherwise. Dr. Sykes says, "The meaning is, Thou hast given me a body, strength, constitution, whereby I am enabled to do thy will, and I am resolved to do it for ever." He adds, "one thing seems very clear from this citation, that this epistle was written originally in Greek, and not in Hebrew; and that we have it in its native language, and not in a translation."

² *In the volume of the book.*] *εν κεφαλιδι.* "In what book was this written concerning David? Ans. The promise made to Abraham was, 'Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.' Gen. xv. 18. This will of God was not accomplished by any who lived before David. He having subdued all opposition, to the river Euphrates, might properly say, that it was *written of him* that he should *do the will of God*. *Κεφαλις* was the first roll, or volume of a book, with the title prefixed. When David here speaks of the head or first volume of the book, he says plainly enough that this was written of him in the book of Genesis, and there we find it." Sykes.

and expresses his determination above all things to obey the commandments of God, in comparison with which the whole ceremonial institute was of no value; *q. d.* Thou takest no pleasure in offerings or sacrifices of any description, and therefore my chief concern shall be to execute thy whole pleasure every where, and at all times, agreeably to the precepts of thy righteous law, and then I am sure that I shall obtain thy favour.

Ch. X.
Ver. 7.

4.) The writer comments upon the text, and argues from it that the Levitical sacrifices are superseded by the great Sacrifice of Christ, ver. 8—10.

After saying first¹, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt offerings, and sacrifices for sin thou dost not choose, neither hast pleasure in them which are offered according to the law, he saith next, Behold, I come to do thy will². He removeth the first³, that he may establish the second. By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ⁴ once-for-all.

8.

9.

10.

Now, my brethren, if you will permit me to accommodate the words of David to our present subject, and to argue upon them as though the Messiah were the speaker, you observe that he first represents all the Levitical sacrifices of every kind as of no value in the sight of God, and as affording him no pleasure even though they were rites of his own appointment: not indeed that they were really displeasing and offensive. The Psalmist speaks comparatively. The Messiah, whom I assume as the speaker, declares that they are of no efficacy in comparison with that which he was about to offer in obedience to the will of his Father and his God.

And let me particularly direct your attention to this circumstance in particular. The speaker does not represent the sacrifices required by the law, and that offering which in duty to God was presented by the Messiah, as contemporary sacrifices, but successive. The first are removed out of the way, to make room for the latter. The sacrifices of the law are superseded by the far superior sacrifice of the gospel: that sacrifice, which was a great act of filial obedience in him by whom it was presented, and on that

¹ *After saying first.*] So Wakefield. *ανωτερον λεγων*. "Above he saith." Newcome.

² *Thy will.*] The received text adds *ὁ Θεός, O God*, which is wanting in the best copies, and dropped by Griesbach.

³ *He removeth the first.*] "He abolisheth the former will and prescription of God concerning legal sacrifices, that he may establish the latter concerning the sacrifice of Christ." Peirce. "He speaks negatively of sacrifices, the stronger to establish the obligation of doing the will of God." Sykes.

⁴ *The body of Jesus Christ.*] *i. e.* Jesus Christ himself, see ver. 5. This allusion shows that *σωμα* was the reading of the LXX. where the author of the epistle cited the text.

Ch. X.
Ver. 10.

account most highly acceptable to God. I mean that one sacrifice of his own person on the cross, by which he consecrated both himself and all his followers once for all, and which being itself the seal and ratification of the new covenant which abolishes the old, puts an end to all the claims of the law, and to all its ceremonial injunctions and pollutions, and makes it impossible for those who are once sanctified and received into covenant to desecrate themselves again.

4. The advancement of Christ to dignity and dominion proves that the sacrifice which he offered was sufficient to accomplish every necessary purpose without repetition, ver. 11—14.

11. *And indeed every high-priest¹ continueth ministering from time to time², and offering frequently the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.*

The high-priests under the law, from year to year, upon the day of atonement, enter into the holy of holies, offering continually their animal sacrifices, whose effect only lasts for a year; at the expiration of which the same sacrifices must be repeated in order to renew the violated covenant.

12. *But this priest³, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever⁴, sat*
13. *down at the right hand of God, waiting, after this, till his enemies be made his footstool⁵.*

Our great high-priest, having entered into the heavenly sanctuary to present that acceptable sacrifice which was to ratify the new covenant, and to put a final period to all the transgressions and sacrifices of the old; having performed the duties of his priestly office, was put into possession of his regal dignity; being appointed head and governor of the universal church. And he is now waiting at the right hand of God in full confidence in the divine promise, that his dominion shall be universal; that error, idolatry, and

¹ *Every high-priest.*] The Alexandrine and Clermont manuscripts, and the Syriac and Æthiopic versions, read ἀρχιερεὺς, *high-priest*; which indeed the connexion requires, as the writer has been speaking of no other. See Peirce.

² *From time to time.*] Gr. “from day to day.” Peirce remarks, that καθ’ ἡμέραν is applied to the high-priest ch. vii. 27, and may denote nothing more than the expression *from time to time*.

³ *But this priest.*] ὁτός, *this man*. “Christ.” Wakefield. The received text reads αὐτός, *he*. See Griesbach.

⁴ *For sins for ever.*] “after offering for ever one sacrifice.” Wakefield. For this construction see Bowyer. Having finished his priestly he assumed his regal office, as a priest after the order of Melchisedec: Psalm cx. 1.

⁵ *His enemies be made his footstool.*] Οἱ ἐχθροὶ sunt, *quicquid impedit salutem quam Christus suis impetrare voluit, scelera, superstitio, idololatria, et mors ipsa ut explicat Paulus 1 Cor. xv. 26.*

vice, shall be subdued by the power of truth, and that even death itself shall ultimately be destroyed. Ch. X.

Therefore, his one offering⁶ hath made those who are sanctified⁷ perfect for ever⁸. Ver. 14.

We may therefore justly conclude, that as Christ is exalted to dignity and dominion, his sacrifice has been accepted and needeth not to be repeated. All those who believe in him, or who, in successive generations, may by faith become members of that holy community of which he is the head, will be considered as sprinkled with the blood of the federal victim, and as incapable of desecrating themselves again by any transgressions of the ceremonial law. In other words, the first covenant being superseded by the second, which is confirmed by the death of Christ, nothing but wilful transgression of its moral precepts can exclude the believer from its privileges and promises.

5. The Jewish scriptures themselves, by declaring the complete remission of sins under the new covenant, virtually announce that all sacrifices are at an end, ver. 15—18.

And the holy spirit also beareth testimony⁹ to us ; for after having first announced, This is the covenant which I will make with them in those days, the Lord saith¹⁰, I will put my laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe 15.
16.

⁶ *Therefore his one offering.*] γὰρ, therefore. See Macknight. The exaltation of Christ to his throne proves that his one offering had been accepted, μία προσφορά, in the nominative case. See Bengel ap. Bowyer, and Wakefield.

⁷ *Those who are sanctified.*] ἁγιαζομενους, those who having discarded *dead works*, the works of the law, ch. ix. 14, have entered by faith into the holy community of which Christ is the head.

⁸ *Perfect for ever.*] See ch. vii. 11, ix. 9, x. 1. So perfectly free from all legal, or ceremonial offences, voluntary or involuntary, as never to be liable to them again : the law of works being completely superseded by the law of faith, that new covenant of which Christ is the mediator, and his death the seal. The meaning is obscurely expressed by Peirce : “ by his one offering he hath made an expiation, which avails perpetually to render all those who partake of the virtue of it completely qualified for the worship of God.” This learned writer, and the generality of modern commentators, perplex themselves and darken the meaning of the author, by imputing to the death of the Messiah an expiatory influence for moral offences, when the writer only means to satisfy the Hebrews that the death of Christ has put an end to the Mosaic institute, the law of works ; and that of course it for ever supersedes the necessity of sacrifices to those who believe in Christ.

⁹ *The spirit beareth testimony.*] “ The holy ghost concurs with us in the truth of what we have been saying.” Sykes. See Peirce. With what address the writer at the close of his argument appeals to the testimony of the prophetic scriptures : a testimony which would have the greatest weight with those to whom he was writing !

¹⁰ *The Lord saith.*] For this construction see Markland, Owen, Bowyer, Griesbach. *I will put my laws.* The LXX. reads διδως δωσω, which makes the construction complete.

Ch X.
Ver. 17.
18.

them upon their minds; and he addeth¹, Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more any sacrifice for sin².

And now to bring my argument to a conclusion. The doctrines which I have advanced in the course of it must, I know, my brethren, have been very offensive to your earliest and most cherished prepossessions. A suffering Messiah, and an abrogated law, are revolting to your feelings: and yet, with respect to the former, I trust that you will allow, upon calm reflection, that there is nothing disgraceful to the Messiah, or inconsistent with the dignity of his character, in his once offering himself up as a victim to ratify the new and better covenant before he took possession of his regal office. And as to the latter, the inspired prophetic writings expressly announce the abolition of the old covenant, and the substitution of the new. In that very prophecy of Jeremiah which I have lately cited, ch. xxxi. 32, God himself, after having foretold that he is about to introduce a new covenant, the laws of which, instead of being engraven on tables of stone, should be inscribed on the tables of the heart; or, in other words, of which the precepts would be so few and simple that all might understand, retain and practise them; in the continuation of the prophecy adds these remarkable words,—“ Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.” Now you cannot suppose that God means to say, that under the new covenant he will overlook all moral guilt. Far from it. It is very true that he will freely and graciously pardon all offences, however great and aggravated, which are truly repented of and forsaken: a declaration which was frequently made under the old covenant. But the sins here spoken of are those legal offences, for the remission of which sacrifices were provided under the old Mosaic dispensation: ceremonial pollutions; offences against holy rites, holy times, holy places, and restrictions relating to food. All these shall be abolished: they shall have no existence under the new dispensation: the one sacrifice of Christ has put an end to them all, by introducing a new and better covenant. But if the offences are abolished, the penalties are of course abolished too. Where there is no transgression, no remission is ne-

¹ *And he addeth, &c.]* These words in the prophet follow at some distance from those before cited, and should be marked as not being a continued citation. See Markland in Bowyer. Jer. xxxi. 32, 34.

² *No more sacrifice for sin.]* So that the very scriptures themselves lead to the conclusion that all sacrifices shall be abolished; and the Levitical law of course superseded.

cessary, no sacrifices are required. The covenant into which you have now entered is a law of liberty.

Ch. X.
Ver. 18.

Such is the reasoning, and such the conclusion, of this pious and eloquent, but uninspired writer. His main and obvious design is to reconcile the believing but unstable Hebrews to the revolting doctrines of a suffering Messiah, and an abrogated law: and he produces arguments which, though not all strictly logical, nor correctly scriptural, are many of them valid, some of them very ingenious, and all of them such as would be acceptable to the taste of the age in which they were written, and were calculated to produce the desired effect upon those to whom they were addressed.

It is sometimes difficult to make out the writer's meaning; but I am inclined to think that the difficulty lies more in the prejudices of the reader, than in the style of the writer. His object is simple and intelligible: he never deviates from his main design; and he is very much in earnest in the prosecution of it. To us, who live in a remote age and country, and under different opinions, habits, and laws, the abolition of the Mosaic ritual is a matter of indifference; and we have no prejudices against a crucified Messiah. But to a Jew, the law was every thing. The Mosaic institute was the great charter of his rights and privileges: it distinguished his nation from all others as the chosen favourites of God. To be told, therefore, that this law was to be repealed, and these privileges were to be laid open to the Gentile world, was the bitterest mortification to Jewish pride; and the subject required to be treated with a very delicate hand. This is the true key to the interpretation of this celebrated epistle.

But the mass of modern critics having their imaginations occupied with the persuasion that the death of Christ was, some how or other, an expiation for the moral offences of mankind, an idea which never crossed the mind of the writer of this epistle, mix up this notion, of which their minds are full, with all which this writer advances upon the subject of ceremonial pollutions and Levitical sacrifices; by which means they miss the true meaning of the author, and involve themselves and their readers in inextricable difficulties; of which we have many instances in the notes of those pious, learned, and laborious expositors, Mr. Peirce and Dr. Sykes³. If the pre-

³ *Mr. Peirce and Dr. Sykes.*] It is curious, and even amusing, to see how these and other ingenious commentators writhe under the pressure of difficulties of their own formation; and

Ch. X.
Ver. 18.

sent writer has succeeded better in elucidating this epistle than his learned and able predecessors, it is entirely owing to the help which they have supplied, and to his having happily escaped from those popular and erroneous opinions in which they, with all their learning, piety, ability, and integrity, were much entangled, and by which they were misled.

The remainder of the epistle consists chiefly of practical advices and exhortations, adapted to the circumstances and views of the Hebrew believers, and urged with great eloquence and force.

PART THE SECOND.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINES ESTABLISHED.

SECTION I.

THE WRITER, entering upon the Practical Part of the Epistle, presses upon the believing Hebrews a stedfast adherence to their Christian profession, and suggests many considerations to guard them against apostasy.

Ch. x. 19—37.

1. The writer urges the believing Hebrews to a cordial acceptance of the

the pains and ingenuity which they display in their contrivances to darken a clear text, and to accommodate the language of the writer to their own preconceived hypothesis. And that without any suspicion that they have misconceived his meaning.

Thus, ch. vii. 28, where the writer speaks of Christ as offering sacrifice for his own sins as well as those of the people, meaning his ceremonial disqualification for the priestly office, as being of the tribe of Judah; the commentators, misled by their unscriptural notion of an atonement for sin, almost unanimously, and without hesitation, flatly contradict the author, by saying, that Christ needed it not, and did not offer any such sacrifice for himself. And again, ch. x. 14, where the writer asserts that "one offering has for ever perfected them that are sanctified:" meaning nothing more than this, that believers in Christ were for ever exempted from the danger of committing any ceremonial offences; a position which his Hebrew readers would perfectly understand: commentators are greatly puzzled in their attempts to reconcile this assertion to their mystical notions concerning the atonement made by Christ for the sins of the world, to which they imagine that the author here alludes. Dr. Sykes, in his long note upon ch. x. 18, shows how much he is gruelled by the broad assertions of this writer; which however are literally true, according to his own sense of them, though not easily reconcileable to certain modern doctrines, however fashionable or popular.

Christian doctrine, which releases them from the terrors of the law, ver. Ch. X.
19—22.

*Having, therefore, brethren, liberty of entrance into the most holy place¹ Ver. 19.
by the blood of Jesus², which entrance he hath consecrated for us³, a lately 20.
opened and living way⁴, through the veil, that is, his flesh⁵; and having a 21.
high-priest over the family of God, let us approach⁶ with a true heart, in 22.
full assurance of faith⁷, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil con-
science⁸.*

Having stated what appeared to be needful to reconcile your minds to the offensive doctrines of a suffering Messiah, and an abrogated law, and having shown that, notwithstanding all the external simplicity of the Christian institution, it may still boast of a priest and lawgiver, of a temple and a service, of a sacrifice and of a sanctuary, far more glorious than that of Moses, permit me now, my beloved brethren, to press upon your consideration some of the important practical consequences which naturally follow from the facts which I have established.

And first, be true to the principles you have adopted, and allow them their proper weight and influence upon your minds: and, seeing that all who be-

¹ *Liberty of entrance into the most holy place.*] παρρησιαν. "full liberty to go into the sanctuary." Wakefield. Though almost all the expositors interpret this of heaven, yet the connexion clearly shows that it must signify the Christian covenant, typified by the celestial tabernacle exhibited to Moses in the Mount, in which Jesus, our high-priest, is represented as officiating.

² *By the blood of Jesus.*] i. e. as the high-priest went into the most holy place purified with the blood of the animal victim, so we, sprinkled with the blood of Christ, may enter into the heavenly sanctuary, i. e. the Christian covenant.

³ *Consecrated for us.*] "When the temple was rebuilt and set apart for religious purposes, it was called its *encænia* (consecration), Ezra vi. 16; when, therefore, the law of Moses was laid aside and its ceremonies removed, and another means to the favour of God was established, the same term was very properly employed." Sykes.

⁴ *A lately opened and living way.*] "προσφατον, propriè recens dictum, deinde generatim recens: cui opponitur παλαιφατον. Ὁδὸς ζωσα, amæna, jucunda: ut regio amæna dicitur vitam nobis reddere." Rosenmuller. "A living way, a way to life." Sykes. Faith is the new and living way, in opposition to the old way of dead works, the works of the law. See ver. 22.

⁵ *The veil, that is, his flesh.*] Many suppose an allusion to the incarnation of Christ, but without necessity. The doctrine of the epistle is, that the death of Christ put an end to the old covenant and introduced the new. To this event probably the writer alludes, as the medium of access to the sanctuary. *through the veil*, that is, *through his flesh*: q. d. through himself, through his death and the sprinkling of his blood.

⁶ *Let us approach.*] προσερχωμεθα. "let us come to that place to which we may have free access, and to which we are so graciously invited." Sykes.

⁷ *Full assurance of faith.*] "plena fide et fiducia." Rosenmuller. This explains what he means by the new and living way, ver. 20. "In full conviction of mind that Jesus is the Christ, and of the consequences of that great and important truth." Sykes.

⁸ *Sprinkled.*] An allusion to the purification of persons and things under the law by the sprinkling of blood: Heb. ix. 9, Numb. xix. 2—10. With minds free from all scruples relating to the precepts or the anathemas of the abrogated law. Mr. Peirce justly observes, that the 22d verse should end at this clause, which ends the sentence in most of the Greek copies.

Ch. X.
Ver. 22.

lieve have free access, through the blood of Jesus, into the celestial sanctuary, by that path which leads to life, which he has so lately opened and consecrated, through the veil of his humiliation and sufferings, into the most holy place, into which he is already entered, and where he is ever ready, as the high-priest of our profession, to present the children of the family at the mercy-seat of their God and Father, let us, my brethren, enter boldly into the sanctuary and lay claim to our privilege. Let us be Christians indeed, undaunted by difficulties, unfettered by prejudices: let us be strong in faith and upright in heart; and, being sprinkled with the blood of the new covenant, let us shake off the fetters of the old; nor let us torment ourselves with groundless apprehensions of any evil consequences of those anathemas which the abrogated law may denounce against such who withdraw their allegiance from its obsolete requisitions.

2. Having made profession of their faith in baptism, he exhorts them to adhere stedfastly to the Christian doctrine, to govern their lives by Christian principles, and to unite with their brethren in Christian communion, ver. 22—29.

23. *And having had our bodies washed¹ with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of our hope² unmoved: for he that hath promised is faithful.*
 24. *And let us consider one another, that we may provoke to love³ and to good*
 25. *works: not leaving off the assembling of ourselves⁴ together, as the custom*

¹ *Our bodies washed.*] Peirce observes, that the writer here speaks of the initiatory rite of baptism; and that if moral purity had been intended, *χειρας*, the hands, would probably have been used, instead of *σωμα*, the body. Some think that an allusion is intended to the washing of the high-priest previously to his entering the most holy place. Lev. xvi. 4.

² *The profession of our hope.*] Our translators read *faith*, upon the authority of one manuscript only: *hope* is unquestionably the authentic reading. See Griesbach.

³ *Provoke to love.*] Mr. Peirce thinks that the author glances at some misconduct of the Hebrew Christians to the Gentile converts; and observes, that "the verse is happily translated in the public version, the word *provoke* having a middle signification like *παροξυσμος* in the original.

⁴ *Not leaving off the assembling ourselves.*] *ἐπισυναγωγην*, "for public worship. Some deserted these assemblies through fear of persecution." Newcome. Peirce supposes an allusion to the prejudices of the Jewish against the Gentile Christians, which induced them to forsake the Christian assemblies upon account of the Gentiles being admitted into them. The word occurs but once more in the New Testament, 2 Thess. ii. 1; where it signifies the gathering together to Christ at the day of judgement, to which Sykes supposes there may be an allusion here. Or it may signify, *q. d.* "Do not leave off the assembling yourselves together, and thereby making a public profession of your faith. Some of you seem ashamed of the gospel, and keep away from all public meetings, not considering their true use." "not abandoning our association in the gospel." Wakefield. Peirce thinks that the writer uses the word *ἐπισυναγωγην* that he may not be supposed to recommend attending at the synagogue.

"The Gnostics," says Dr. Priestley, "laid no stress on public worship, or any of the posi-

of some is, but exhorting to it, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching⁵.

Ch. X.
Ver. 25.

Having been baptized as an emblem of our purification from all ceremonial pollution, and as a symbol of initiation into the Christian covenant, let us stedfastly adhere to those principles which we profess, and which lie at the foundation of our immortal hope. And since our faith and hope rest upon the promise of a faithful and unchangeable God, we have a sure foundation for steady confidence. Therefore, let our Christian principles produce their proper effect upon our conduct: and, instead of watching each other, in order to discover something amiss in each other's temper, views, or conduct, to justify or palliate the use of bitter and exasperating language, let us rather emulate each other's excellencies, and vie with each other in good will and good works. Remembering that we profess one common faith, and are united under one common head, let us not quarrel upon lesser points, nor desert Christian assemblies, as some do, for differences of opinion concerning rites and ceremonies which now cease to be obligatory. Instead of this uncandid behaviour, let us exhort each other to Christian communion, and to a regular attendance on social worship, and the rather as you cannot but remark, from the commotions which are taking place in different parts of Judea and its neighbourhood, that the great day of calamity and destruction, so solemnly and explicitly foretold by Christ, cannot be far distant. At this season security and peace are promised to the true disciples of Jesus amidst great national calamity and desolation: it is therefore of the utmost importance that you should not forfeit your claim to this privilege by excluding yourselves from Christian assemblies.

The writer here touches, but very gently, lest he should give offence, upon

tive institutions of religion. They had no regular officiating ministers or places of worship; and by this means they more easily escaped persecution. But the apostle insists upon a very different system, urging the importance of public assemblies of Christians, which answer several very excellent purposes. One is, that of an open profession of Christianity, to which all Christians are bound; another is that of public instruction; and a third of no less consequence is, that of forming Christians into a regular body, connecting them together, and thus bringing them under an obligation to mutual exhortation and assistance; which in time of persecution is of the greatest use."

"deserere τὴν ἐπισ. deficere a religione Christiana. Sed verba καθὼς εἶδος τῶσι, hanc interpretationem vix admittere videntur. Omnia autem optime adhærent, si cogites, hanc negligentiam in frequentandis cætibus Christianis fuisse initium defectionis ab ipsa religione." Rosenmuller.

⁵ The day approaching.] The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which Jesus had foretold: the accomplishment of which prophecy was then visibly approaching. "The great day of retribution coming on, as our life draws to an end, and the danger of death is increased by persecution," Newcome.

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Ver. 25.

the extreme jealousy which the Jewish Christians entertained of the Gentile converts, and of their unwillingness to hold communion with them unless they would submit to the rites of the law; and the argument he urges would come home very powerfully to their personal feelings. For, by excluding themselves from the communion of the church, they excluded themselves from its privileges, and from that protection which Christ had promised his disciples in the day of national desolation: while, therefore, they were giving vent to their spleen and prejudice against the Gentile converts, they were inadvertently exposing themselves to the greatest personal danger, and placing themselves out of the protection of the divine promise.

3. The writer warns them earnestly against apostasy from their Christian profession, ver. 26—37; and,

1.) He reminds them of the severe and inevitable punishments to which apostates are exposed, ver. 26—31.

26. *For if we sin wilfully*¹, *after having received the knowledge of the truth,*
27. *there no longer remaineth any sacrifice for sin*², *but a certain fearful expectation of judgement*³, *and a fiery indignation*⁴, *that will devour the adversaries.*

My brethren, above all things beware of apostasy. It has been our privilege to receive the truth in the knowledge of it. We not only admit the

¹ *If we sin wilfully.*] The author is here speaking, not of every presumptuous sin, but of deliberate apostasy. See ver. 29. Peirce, Macknight, and Secker *ap.* Newcome.

² *Any sacrifice for sin:*] *i. e.* there is no sacrifice by which persons guilty of this offence may be restored to a covenant state. Why not? Because apostasy in such circumstances, when the strongest evidence has been resisted, is a state from which it is morally impossible that a man should recover. Under the law sacrifices were instituted for many offences against ceremonial institutions: under the new dispensation all sacrifices are abolished, because the offences which required them are themselves abolished. No such transgressions can exclude from the gospel covenant; but apostasy, wilful deliberate apostasy, does exclude, and no sacrifice remains to restore the offender to his privileges again. The reason is, that it is morally impossible that he should repent. And the writer expresses himself strongly, to deter the timid and unstable Hebrews from apostasy; but he no where says that if they repent they will not be restored. "Suppose," says Dr. Sykes, "a man to sin wilfully, and suppose, too, that there is no sacrifice for sin, because all sacrifices are put down, yet Repentance is left; and God is merciful, and repentance will produce its effect."

³ *A certain fearful expectation of judgement.*] "a certain frightful, formidable expectation of condemnation, arising from the sense of justice in God, and the fitness of punishment to sin." Sykes. Perhaps arising also from our Lord's predictions of national calamity and desolation which were upon the verge of being accomplished to the uttermost.

⁴ *Fiery indignation.*] *πυρος ζηλος*, "zeal of fire: a thorough disposition and resolution to punish most severely the adversaries of Christ." Sykes. "a raging fire." Wakefield. *Which is about to devour* (*μελλοντος*) *the adversaries:* q. d. The wrath of God, like a consuming fire, is just ready to fall upon the malignant enemies and persecutors of the gospel.

gospel doctrine to be true, and receive it as a truth of the highest importance which has ever been communicated to man, but we receive and acknowledge it upon the most cogent evidence, upon evidence which commands our most deliberate assent, and which subdues our most inveterate prejudices. Let us stedfastly adhere to our profession; for wretched beyond conception will be our lot if we apostatize from it. If it could possibly happen, that after such conviction and such profession as ours we could basely desert the cause of truth, and become open enemies to the faith of Christ, our case were hopeless indeed. No sacrifice remains: no provision is made for the restoration of apostates under such circumstances. Having already resisted the strongest evidence, and overcome the most powerful motives, it is morally impossible that they should be reclaimed. They have nothing more to expect but the vengeance of an insulted God, and to be speedily involved in the approaching inevitable ruin of their hardened and abandoned countrymen.

Ch. X.
Ver. 27.

Any one who breaketh⁵ the law of Moses⁶ dieth without mercy, upon the evidence of two or three witnesses: of how much severer punishment, think ye, will he be deemed worthy, who trampleth upon⁷ the son of God, and accounteth the blood of the covenant, by which he was sanctified⁸, an unholy thing, and insulteth the spirit of grace⁹.

28.

29.

The law of Moses passes an irreversible sentence of death upon the presumptuous transgressor of its ceremonial precepts, when convicted upon sufficient evidence. How much more severe, then, must be the punishment

⁵ *Any one who breaketh.*] ἀθετήσας. So Wakefield, Sykes. “sc. ἐκβρωσως. Αθετειν, ὑβριζειν, καταφρονειν. Hesychius. Qui Mosis legem violat, contemnit.” Rosenmuller. “The presumptuous offender. Numb. xv. 35.” Sykes. The form of expression implies that the Jewish polity still existed.

⁶ *Law of Moses.*] Peirce justly observes, that the law of Moses must here be restricted to the ceremonial law, otherwise the argument *a fortiori* would not hold. This is confirmed by a reference to the law itself, Numb. xv. 30, which immediately precedes the account of the man who was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the sabbath-day.

⁷ *Trampleth upon.*] This, as Peirce observes, is an expression of scorn, Isa. xxvi. 5, 6, Mal. v. 3; and of rage, Isa. lxiii. 3, xiv. 25, Dan. viii. 10.

⁸ *The blood of the covenant, by which he was sanctified.*] The blood of Christ is the blood of the covenant, not the blood of atonement, but that by which the covenant was ratified; by which he, the apostate, was sanctified, that is, ceremonially separated from the unbelieving world, not morally purified. *An unholy thing:* κοινον, a common thing. They regarded his death in no other light than that of a common malefactor. See Peirce.

⁹ *Insulteth the spirit of grace.*] “shows contempt of the holy spirit gratuitously shed on Christians.” Archbishop Newcome. “the mercies of the gospel.” Wakefield; who observes, that “Christianity is entitled the *spirit*, in contradiction to the carnal ceremonies of the Jews.” Sykes gives a similar interpretation. It is more consistent with the writer's argument to suppose that he refers to spiritual gifts and miraculous powers.

Ch. X.
Ver. 29.

of the apostate from Christianity, whose offence is so much greater, and the aggravations of it so peculiar ; who, having first admitted the claims of Jesus as the Messiah, now rejects him with scorn and rage ; who, having once become a party in the Christian covenant, now renounces his concern in it, regards the death of the great federal victim as that of a common malefactor, and disowns all relation to him ; and who, having once been convinced of the truth of the Christian doctrine by the miraculous powers of its first teachers, now rejects this divine evidence, and malignantly represents the miracles of Jesus and his apostles as the effect of fraud and diabolical agency ?

30. *For we know who hath said*¹, *Vengeance* belongeth unto me²; *I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge his people*³.
31. *It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*⁴.

Conversant as you are with the writings of Moses, you remember that in his celebrated prophetic song, he introduces God himself as declaring, that it is his prerogative to punish guilt; and to prove that he is not there speaking of the heathen only, he adds, a little further on, "The Lord shall judge his people;" by which he declares his firm purpose to punish those who have stood in the nearest relation to him, and have been most highly favoured by him, if they violate their engagements and break his laws. And, from these declarations, we may certainly conclude, that apostates from the Christian faith shall suffer condign punishment. What that punishment will be, it is impossible to conceive or to describe. But of one thing we are assured,—that it will be dreadful and insupportable. And though the prophets of God, who proclaim his judgements, are one after

¹ *We know who hath said, &c.*] This is commonly understood of God: "*quis et quantus.*" Grotius. And Newcome observes, "that there is great dignity in the expression."

² *Vengeance belongeth, &c.*] Peirce observes, that the quotation differs both from the Hebrew and the Greek; and he suggests an ingenious criticism, by which to reconcile it to the original. It is cited from Deut. xxxii. 35. The words, *saith the Lord*, are not either in the Hebrew or the LXX.; and in the Epistle they are wanting in the Clermont and some other copies and versions. They are needless, and perhaps spurious. The same text is cited Rom. xii. 19. See Griesbach, Whitby, and Sykes.

³ *The Lord will judge his people.*] This text almost immediately follows the preceding quotation, Deut. xxxii. 36. It is understood by most expositors in a favourable sense: *q. d.* the Lord shall avenge his people. Mr. Peirce contends, that it is to be taken in the sense of punishing, both here and in the original. There can be no doubt that it is quoted in that sense by this author. Dr. Sykes says, "it is cited only as an evidence that God will certainly take notice of and punish with severity his people that wilfully offend. The general words are to be taken in their general sense; and that is what they are quoted for."

⁴ *The living God.*] The prophets who foretold the punishments that should be inflicted upon apostates are dead, but God ever lives to fulfill those threatenings which he authorized them to denounce. "who ever liveth to execute his vengeance." Newcome.

another removed from the land of the living, nevertheless God himself remains from age to age, to fulfill to the utmost, and be assured that he will fully accomplish all that his wisdom and his justice have denounced.

Ch. X.
Ver. 31.

2.) As an antidote to apostasy, the writer urges upon them the recollection of their former zeal, fortitude, and resolution, ver. 32—35.

But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great combat⁵ of suffering: partly while ye were made a public spectacle⁶ by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, while ye shared with those who were so treated. For indeed ye sympathized with those who were in bonds⁷: and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods: knowing that ye have for yourselves⁸ a better and an enduring substance⁹. Therefore, cast not away your confidence¹⁰, which will receive a great reward.

Are any of you now become lukewarm in your attachment to the gospel, and ready to abandon the profession of it? Are you disgusted with its doctrines, ashamed of its reproach, and afraid of suffering for it? Recollect, I beseech you, how differently you thought and felt a few years ago, when the joyful tidings were first proclaimed. Recollect how irresistible was the evidence of these glorious facts: how strong the conviction which it carried to your mind, how it dispelled the darkness of your understanding, triumphed over the most inveterate prejudice, and satisfied you completely as to the wisdom of the Christian scheme, its correspondence with the prophecies, and its har-

⁵ *A great combat.*] Chrysostom observes, that "he does not say *trials* (πειρασμοις), but *combat* (αθλησιν): a word that denotes great praise and commendation." See Peirce.

⁶ *Made a public spectacle.*] θρατριζομενοι, "exposed as upon a theatre." Peirce. 1 Cor. iv. 9. Grotius. "to wild beasts and other deaths." Newcome.

⁷ *Those who were in bonds.*] δεσμοις. This is the reading of the Alexandrine and Clermont manuscripts, and of the Syriac, Coptic, and Vulgate versions; also of Chrysostom, Theodoret, &c. It is adopted by Griesbach, Peirce, and Newcome. The common reading is, *with me in my bonds*, τοις δεσμοις με. "Ye had compassion on me in my bonds. Or, ye had compassion upon those who were in chains for Christ." Sykes. "τ. δ. μ. Effecta esse videtur hæc lectio a librariis, qui hoc etiam argumento confirmare voluerunt Pauli esse hanc epistolam." Rosenmüller.

⁸ *For yourselves.*] εχειν εαυτοις. The best authorities omit εν before εαυτοις. Griesbach, Newcome. Mr. Hallett, the learned continuator of Mr. Peirce's *Commentary*, which was broken off by death while he was examining this text, upon the authority of the Alexandrine and other manuscripts and versions, reads εαυτες, "knowing that ye yourselves have," &c.

⁹ *Enduring substance.*] The received text adds εν θρανοις, *in heaven*; which words are wanting in the Alexandrine and Clermont manuscripts, and the Æthiopic, Vulgate, and Italic versions. See Griesbach and Wakefield.

¹⁰ *Your confidence.*] παρρησια properly signifies courage and resolution in professing truth. Mark viii. 32, John vii. 26, Acts iv. 13, 29, 31. Hallett, Grotius. "Hold fast that liberty, that freedom of access which is granted to you to enter the holy of holies." Sykes.

Ch. X.
Ver. 35.

mony with all preceding dispensations. Think how soon you were called out to suffer for this profession, when Stephen was stoned, when James was beheaded, when Peter was imprisoned, when enraged persecutors breathed out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. Recollect the firmness and fortitude with which you bore the severe conflict: some of you being publicly exposed to insults, and severe corporal punishment, as though you were the worst of malefactors, and others being compelled to be the wretched spectators of torments inflicted upon persons dearer to them than themselves; and whom they would willingly have redeemed by suffering in their place. For indeed you sympathized tenderly with those who suffered bonds and imprisonment for Christ and his religion, and endured heroically the loss of all things, relying with joyful confidence on the mercy of God and the promises of the gospel: and assured of ample recompense both here and hereafter, in present peace, in triumphant hope, and in a resurrection to eternal life and happiness. Having set out in your career with these just and animating views, and with this undaunted vigour and resolution, let me entreat you to persevere, and do not, now that the conflict is almost closed, and victory is at hand, disgrace your character, dishonour your profession, and endanger your immortal interests, by deserting the cause, by casting away your armour, and in a cowardly manner quitting the field. I conjure you to keep up your courage, and maintain the struggle a little longer, and then your success is certain, and your reward will be glorious.

It would be inexcusable not to remark upon the irresistible evidence arising from the facts stated by this writer, in favour of the truth and divine authority of the Christian religion. These Hebrew Christians, to whom the epistle is addressed, were contemporaries with Christ and his apostles, and lived in the very place where he taught his doctrine, performed his miracles, suffered crucifixion, and was raised from the dead; and where the gifts and powers of the holy spirit were first, and most abundantly and publicly communicated. They had the best opportunities of inquiring into the truth of these facts, and were prompted by the most cogent motives. They could not be deceived: and so well were they satisfied as to the truth of them, that they yielded up their most cherished and deeply rooted prejudices, and submitted to the most cruel persecutions for the profession of a doctrine entirely founded upon them. These facts therefore must be unquestionable, and the Christian doctrine must be true and divine.

3.) The shortness of the time in which their patience would continue to be exercised is suggested as an additional argument for persevering fortitude, ver. 36, 37. Ch. X.

For ye have need of patience, that when ye have done the will of God ye may receive the promise¹. For yet a very little while indeed, and he that is to come² will come, and will not delay. Ver. 36. 37.

I will not deceive you by representing the profession of Christianity in your circumstances as a safe or an easy thing. Believers in Jesus, in the land of Judea, in its present state, must expect still to suffer cruelty and indignity, and still to sympathize with Christian sufferers. You must arm yourselves with patience, you must persevere in obedience, you must submit to persecution: if you fall back, you will forfeit all your hopes: but if you persevere, you shall not be disappointed: God will be faithful to his promise: and be assured, for your encouragement, that the remaining season of trial will be very short. For, to allude to the declaration of the prophet Habakkuk, in a very short time indeed, much shorter than either you or your enemies and persecutors may apprehend, He, who has declared that he is about to appear, to the confusion of his enemies, and for the succour and avenging of his friends, will indeed fulfill his awful declaration. And by the instrumentality of the Roman power, though he may not personally appear upon the occasion, he will inflict signal vengeance upon his enemies and yours, from which all those who believe his gospel and regard his admonitions shall be happily exempted.

There can be little doubt that the writer here alludes to the approaching

¹ *To receive the promise*] "is, to receive the accomplishment of the promise. Luke xxiv. 49, Acts vii. 17, i. 4, Gal. iii. 14." Hallett.

² *He that is to come.*] Mr. Hallett thinks that the original expression in the prophet Habakkuk ii. 3, should be rendered *it*: i. e. the vision will surely come; and that this version best suits the design of the writer in this quotation. *q. d.* that blessing tendered in the promise of the new covenant will come, &c. But it appears more probable that the writer here alludes to the escape of the Christians at the destruction of Jerusalem: which had been promised by Christ, and which was fulfilled remarkably at that dangerous and critical season: see ver. 25, also ch. viii. 13. See Whitby's note. "The apostle," [the writer of the epistle,] says Dr. Sykes, "had plainly the words of the prophet Habakkuk in view, ch. ii. 3, 4. But yet, as he has not so much as hinted at any thing as written in the prophet, nor said whose sentiment he used, we are not to understand him as appealing to a prophecy, but only as applying the prophet's words to his own purpose. The Hebrews were to wait with patience and perseverance, that they might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. They were to hold out yet for some time, be it more or less; and he that is to come will come, and will not delay his coming beyond the time appointed."—"Non probandi causa Paulus hæc verba affert, sed utitur prophetæ verbis ad suos animi sensus exprimendos." Rosenmuller.

Ch. X.
Ver. 37.

destruction of the city and the temple, in which dreadful catastrophe myriads of the unbelieving Jews perished, while the great body of Christians, warned by the declarations of Jesus, escaped in time from the desolating storm.

SECTION II.

THE WRITER, after having explained the nature of faith, illustrates its excellence by the examples of those worthies whose history is recorded in the Old Testament. Heb. x. 38—xi. 40.

1. He reminds the believing Hebrews that perseverance is the only means of ensuring the reward of faith, ver. 38, 39.

38. *Now the just by faith shall live*¹: *yet if he draw back, God saith I will*
39. *have*² *no complacency in him. But we are not of those who draw back to*
*destruction, but of those who have faith to their own deliverance*³.

I have been reminding you, that in a very short time that desolating calamity will take place which Jesus foretold immediately before his crucifixion. If you are sincere believers in Jesus, you shall escape from the unparalleled miseries of that awful crisis. For, as the prophet Habakkuk observes upon a similar occasion, "He that is just by faith shall live," so I now assure you, that if you believe the doctrine and the declarations of Jesus

¹ *The just by faith.*] This is a quotation from, or rather an allusion to, Habak. ii. 4, in the Greek version; which in this case differs from the Hebrew, though it agrees with the Arabic. There are, however, two manuscripts which countenance the LXX. and Arabic versions, which Hallett and others think was the original reading. "The meaning of the prophet," says Archbishop Newcome in his note on the original, is, "the good or righteous man who believes in my prophets and obeys their directions, shall live at the time of the Babylonish invasion. See Jer. xxi. 9, xxxviii. 2, 17, 18. In the New Testament the words are accommodated." This observation is perfectly just; and in the instance before us, it is applied by the writer of the epistle to the escape of the believing Hebrews, who took warning from the prophecies of Jesus, from the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans: by their faith they saved their lives. The clauses are transposed. Archbishop Newcome's version from the Hebrew is, "Behold! his soul is lifted up, it is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." The LXX. reads, "If he draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him; but the just shall live by faith."

² *I will have.*] Gr. "my soul will have," &c. See Newcome. This is one instance among innumerable others to prove, that the *soul* does not signify a separable immaterial substance, but a person's self. No one will maintain that God has a separable soul.

³ *To their own deliverance.*] εἰς περιποίησιν ψυχῆς, *to the deliverance of the soul*: or, as Mr. Wakefield translates, *of our lives*. Alluding to the escape of the believing Hebrews from the approaching calamities of their country. "to the saving of the soul." Newcome, and the generality of commentators. An excellent and most important sense certainly; but not so agreeable to the context.

Christ, and avow yourselves his disciples, and, warned by his predictions, provide for your escape, you shall live through the approaching storm. But on the other hand, if you desert your principles and abandon your profession, your conduct will be highly displeasing to God, and you will suffer as your forefathers did, and as your unbelieving countrymen will do, the just consequences of your folly and guilt. But I trust, my Christian friends, that we shall all act a wiser part: I trust that we shall not be found in the wretched number of those who, by apostatizing from our profession, shall perish with our countrymen, but that we shall persevere in giving credit to the declarations of Jesus, and thus provide for our safety in the general ruin.

Ch. X.
Ver. 39.

2. The writer defines that faith which was the operative principle in the eminent characters recorded in the Old Testament. Ch. xi. 1, 2.

Now faith is the confident expectation⁴ of things hoped for, the firm conviction⁵ of things not seen. For by it the ancients obtained an honourable testimony⁶.

Ch. XI.
Ver. 1.
2.

If you want to know what that faith is which will afford you security in the season of danger, and will ensure deliverance here and hereafter, I must inform you that it is not a mere speculative assent to truth, but a living practical principle. It lies at the foundation of Christian hope: it is an unhesitating assent to the promise of God through Christ: it is such an

⁴ *Now faith is the confident expectation.*] ὑπόστασις, “which we translate *substance*, is properly the basis or foundation, or groundwork, upon which any thing is built; and it is plain that such things as we hope for, must have some ground or reason, or else we should hope without reason; which would be nothing less than folly. Faith in the promise of God is the foundation of our hope of future happiness.” Sykes. “Faith,” says Hallett, “is such a firm persuasion as gives, as it were, a substance, or present existence, to the good things we hope for.” He observes, that “the word ὑπόστασις is here used in its most natural and usual sense;” and adds, that “this sense is confirmed by the Syriac version.” “Now faith is a persuasion concerning those things that are in hope, as if they did actually exist.” Chrysostom’s comment is: “Things that are only hoped for seem to have no ὑπόστασις, *subsistence*, but faith gives them a subsistence, or *being*.” Newcome observes, that “the word *faith* is elegantly taken up from ch. x. 39.”

⁵ *The conviction.*] ἐλεγχος. Hallett remarks, that “the original word properly signifies a demonstration, or such kind of argument as both convinces the understanding, and engages a man to act according to that conviction.” “The object of faith,” says Newcome, “is either τὸ ἐλπίζομενον, as the happiness of a future state, or τὸ μὴ βλεπομενον, as that God made the world.”

⁶ *The ancients obtained an honourable testimony,*] which they would not have done if their faith had been a mere speculative assent. “By the term πρεσβυτεροι,” says Bishop Barrington, “in this passage is evidently meant, the ancestors of the Hebrews. This and some other texts in which the term occurs, induce me to be of opinion, that πρεσβυτερος in the New Testament frequently signifies, not an office, but a character of age, of standing in the Christian church, and particularly the first fruits of conversion to the gospel, in a nation, province, or congregation.”

Ch. XI.
Ver. 2.

assured conviction of the truth and reality of the facts related, as shall induce you to act as if you had yourselves been present with them, and eye witnesses of them. This is the faith which will guide and govern the feelings and the conduct as powerfully as the immediate impressions of sense: and it was by such a faith as this that those holy men, whose histories are recorded in the Hebrew scriptures, obtained that high reputation in which they were held by their contemporaries and by posterity, and performed those extraordinary actions of which God himself was pleased to testify his approbation.

3. By faith we learn that the moral dispensations of God to mankind have a supernatural origin, ver. 3.

3. *By faith¹ we understand that the ages² were arranged by the power of God, that so what is now seen³ did not arise from things which before appeared.*

The first object of faith is, that God governs the world; and that he has from time to time interfered in an extraordinary and supernatural manner for the moral instruction and improvement of his human offspring. The scriptures teach us that he first gave to Adam, and afterwards to Noah, a law for the

¹ *By faith:*] that is, in the history of the divine dispensations recorded in the scriptures.—It is from them we learn that God revealed his word to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, &c. So that the revolutions in the moral state of things which then took place were not the result of any peculiar wisdom in Abraham, or Moses, but of an immediate divine interposition and command.

² *The ages.*] *τας αιωνας.* “This word,” says Archbishop Newcome, and most interpreters with him, “is explained in the following clause by the *things that are seen*; so that it must be understood of the visible material world, called into being by the word or command of God.” See Gen. i. 1. “Reason,” says Hallett, “could not discover that God spake the word, gave the command, and that hereupon the creatures came into being.” He observes that “the word here spoken of is not the divine Logos, but God’s word of command (*ρημα*), which ordered the creatures into being.”

Dr. Sykes, however, understands the word *αιωνες* to signify *ages*, or certain periodical revolutions of time: 1. from Adam to the flood; 2. the patriarchal age to the law; 3. the age of the law to Christ. He renders the clause, “By faith we understand that the ages were adapted or fitted by the word of God; i. e. by his command or direction suited to their proper ends.” He even says, note on Heb. i. 2: “There is not any one instance in the New Testament in which more than this seems to be meant by the word *αιων*.” Mr. Wakefield adopts the same interpretation, and renders the text, “by faith we understand that the ages were so ordered by divine power, that the present state of things arose not from what did *then* appear.”

³ *That so what is, &c.*] *εις το μηκ. τ. λ.* “so that things which are seen,” &c. Public Version. “This,” says Hallett, “is certainly a wrong translation. *εις το* can never signify *so that*; but must be rendered *that so*, *to the end that*, or the like. See Eph. i. 12, 1 Cor. x. 6. *q. d.* to the end that the things which are seen may not *seem*, or *be thought to* have been made of things that do appear. That they may not be thought to have been made of some præ-existent matter: to prevent any suspicion of this, he assures us that God made them by his mere word of command.” If *αιωνας* is translated *ages*, the meaning seems to be, that the several dispensations were introduced, not by natural means, but by an immediate divine interposition.

government of all their posterity. Afterwards, when mankind degenerated into idolatry and vice, he called Abraham out of his idolatrous state, and made a covenant with him and his posterity. In a succeeding age he delivered the law to Moses from Mount Sinai: and latterly he has spoken to us by Jesus Christ, by whom he has entered with us who believe, into a new and better covenant. These interpositions of his mercy he has revealed us, to the end that we might not imagine that these revolutions in the moral circumstances of mankind were mere natural or casual events, brought to pass by human power and wisdom: but that we might know and acknowledge them in their successive order to have been introduced by the immediate interposition, the power and goodness of the great Author of nature and parent of mankind, that we might admire his wisdom in all his dispensations, and might rejoice and be thankful that our happy lot is cast under the reign of the Messiah.

Ch. XI.
Ver. 3.

4. The writer illustrates the excellence of faith by the examples of many eminent persons whose histories are related in the Jewish scriptures, ver. 4—40.

1.) The excellency of faith is exemplified in the conduct of Abel, ver. 4.

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained testimony that he was righteous, God bearing witness to his offering; and through this, though dead, he still speaketh.

4.

I shall now proceed to illustrate the excellence of faith, by calling to your remembrance some eminent examples of its powerful and beneficial influence contained in your sacred history, which may both explain my doctrine and excite your emulation.

And let me, first, remind you of the faith of Abel, whose sad history is related in the book of Genesis, where it is recorded that both he and his brother Cain brought their offerings to Jehovah, each of them from the produce of his respective occupation. Cain, who was a cultivator of the land, brought a present of the fruit of the ground; and Abel, who was a shepherd, offered the choicest of the lambs of his flock. The outward act was similar in both. In each, by an appropriate gift, gratitude was apparently expressed to the sovereign benefactor. But the eye of God penetrates the heart; and he saw that where the external acts were similar the inward temper was widely different. The history tells us that Jehovah testified approbation to Abel and his offering, but the contrary to Cain and his offering. In what manner he

Ch. XI.
Ver. 4.

manifested this approbation and disapprobation we know not ; for the history is silent, and conjecture is vain. But the foundation of it was the different character of the different men. Abel entertained just apprehensions of God, his faith was practical, his heart was right, and therefore his sacrifice was accepted : while that of Cain, whose faith had no influence upon his conduct, and who was in his heart malignant and envious, a liar and a murderer, was for this reason justly rejected. And the important lesson which the sacrifice of Abel teaches us to this day is this, that a firm and practical faith is the only principle of acceptable worship ¹.

2.) The faith of Enoch is next celebrated, ver. 5, 6.

5. *By faith Enoch was translated, so that he saw not death, and was no more found, because God had translated him ; for before his translation he*
6. *obtained this testimony, that he pleased God. Now without faith it is impossible to please him : for he who cometh to God must believe that he exists, and is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him.*

If we pass on a little further in the history, we shall meet with another memorable example of the excellence and efficacy of faith in the antediluvian patriarch Enoch, of whom it is related, Gen. v. 24, *that he walked with God, and he was not to be found, because God took him.* Now, if we attentively consider the circumstances of the narration, we shall see that this great distinction of exemption from death was owing to the firmness and the practical influence of the patriarch's faith. He walked with God, that is, he conversed with his Maker in acts of devotion, and habitually lived under an impressive sense of the divine presence, and a solicitous concern to approve himself in the sight of God. And this character which is given of Enoch in the history necessarily implies that he was acceptable to God : of which God was pleased to give this signal proof, that he translated him from a mortal to an immortal state in the midst of life, before he had finished half the time usually allotted to man at that period ; and miraculously exempted him from the stroke of death : thus exhibiting to the antediluvian world, which was then beginning to be very degenerate, a signal proof

¹ *Acceptable worship.*] This appears to me to be the just and obvious meaning of the passage. As to all the inferences which have been drawn from the story of Abel concerning the divine appointment of animal sacrifices, the necessity of a propitiatory offering, Abel's faith in the atonement of Christ, and the like, they are to the last degree precarious, and seem to originate wholly in the fond partiality of men to their own mysterious and unscriptural notions, without the least foundation in the narrative.

of his moral government, and of the future expectations of man. But this excellence of character in Enoch was unquestionably the result of a vigorous faith: for he could not have been that humble, dutiful, and habitual worshiper of God, that fearless professor of religion, in a depraved and degenerate age, if he had not been a firm believer both in the existence and moral government of God. For the worship and service of God necessarily supposes a previous persuasion that there is an original all-perfect Being, who approves of virtue, and who will not suffer real integrity to go without its just reward².

Ch. XI.
Ver. 6.

3.) He celebrates the faith of Noah, ver. 7.

By faith Noah having been warned by God³ concerning things not then seen, moved with pious reverence⁴, prepared an ark for the preservation of his family; by which he condemned the world⁵, and became heir of the justification⁶ which is by faith.

7.

² Just reward.] The writer assumes the truth of the narration in the book of Genesis, and, admitting the facts, his conclusions are just. Nevertheless, as the inspiration of the writer of that book is no where asserted, and as the sources of his information are of doubtful authority, I do not know that we are obliged to admit the truth of the facts without hesitation. In the present instance there appears to me sufficient reason for suspending assent. When Jesus was transfigured, Moses and Elijah appeared to him and conversed with him. Had Enoch been translated, as they probably were, it is reasonable to believe that he also would have appeared with them. Upon this subject, however, we are not very competent to judge, and must be content to leave the history in the same obscurity in which we find it.

It appears to me certain, from the appearance of Moses at the mount of transfiguration, Luke ix. 30, 31, that Moses did not die: and it seems very probable that the same two persons who were seen at the mount of transfiguration to converse with Jesus concerning his approaching sufferings, afterwards appeared at his tomb, Luke xxiv. 4, to announce his resurrection, and again at the Mount of Olives, Acts i. 10, 11, when our Lord ascended to announce his future visible and glorious return. It is some confirmation of this hypothesis, that the two persons who appeared upon these occasions are expressly called *ἀνδρες*, *men*.

"It were much to be wished," says Dr. Priestley, "but it is to no purpose, that we knew something more of what preceded the translation of Enoch. So great an event, and the first of its kind, had no doubt some very important cause. It is possible, but this we can only conjecture, that Enoch might have been authorized to teach the doctrine of a future life, and that, as a proof of its reality, he might be removed into it without dying, since his translation would be a miracle better adapted to confirm his doctrine than any other that should have had no relation to such a state." Dr. Priestley supposes that the doctrine of a future life, which is the great object of the whole scheme of revelation, must have been communicated to mankind in some period prior to the law of Moses. He conjectures that "it was communicated to Adam himself, and that it was further confirmed to Enoch;" and observes, that "the translation of Enoch and Elijah was not calculated to give mankind any idea of a state of happiness without the body, but the contrary."

³ Warned by God.] *χρηματισθεις*, upon warning from heaven. "*Proprie, circa aliquam rem explicandam, vel constituendam, vel efficiendam versor — oraculum divinum edo, divinitus admoneo.*" Schleusner.

⁴ Moved with pious reverence] "and just regard to God." See ch. xii. 28. Sykes. "*εὐλαβηθεις, pie ac religiose oraculum Dei colens.*" Rosenmuller.

Ch. XI.
Ver. 7.

The next remarkable instance of the excellence and efficacy of practical faith is that of Noah, one of the descendants of Enoch, of whose history we read in Gen. vi., and of whom the same character is given as of his pious ancestor, ver. 9, "He was a just man and perfect in his generation, and he walked with God." This character he bore in times still more degenerate and depraved than those of Enoch, and when the whole human race had become so corrupt and abominable, that God, their creator, is said to have "repented that he had made man upon the earth," ver. 6, and he determined to destroy the whole race of human beings by a deluge, with the single exception of Noah and his family. Of this event he gave a direct warning to Noah, and ordered him to prepare an ark for his escape: and though there was no appearance which would lead to the expectation of so terrible a catastrophe; though every thing went on in its usual course for months and years after the warning had been given; though his profligate and abandoned contemporaries treated his solemn admonitions and exhortations with contempt, and no doubt ridiculed him as a dotard and a madman for the preparation he was making to escape from a calamity of which they had no apprehension; yet this holy patriarch, relying with unwavering confidence upon the truth of the divine declarations, and firmly convinced that the threatened catastrophe would assuredly take place at the appointed season, built the ark, agreeably to the divine direction, for the preservation of himself and his family, and the various species of terrestrial animals.—Thus did the vigour of his faith, and the wisdom of his correspondent conduct, illustrate and more distinctly exhibit the folly and the guilt of the unbelieving world, and the justice of their subsequent condemnation. And thus by faith he obtained the privilege of deliverance from that dreadful catastrophe which was justly inflicted upon his deluded and profligate contemporaries.

4.) He exemplifies the efficacy and success of faith in the case of Abraham and Sarah, ver. 8—16.

(1.) The first memorable instance of the faith of Abraham was, his mi-

⁵ *Condemned the world.*] "He condemned the world of incredulity by his faith, which was well grounded and sufficiently attested." Sykes.

⁶ *The justification.*] "obtained the deliverance." Sykes. "according to his faith." Wakefield. "Noah became entitled to those good things, which are promised to such whose faith in God makes them act from a hearty desire of pleasing him, however imperfect such acts may be." Sykes.

gration by divine direction from his native country to the land of Canaan, Ch. XI. ver. 8—10.

By faith Abraham, being called to depart for that place which he was afterwards to receive as an inheritance, obeyed; and departed, though he knew not whither he was going. Ver. 8.

Abraham, the founder of our nation, was originally a native of Chaldea and an idolater. He became a worshiper of the true God; and being exposed to persecution in his native country, he received a divine command to leave it and to go to the land of Canaan: a country to which he was an utter stranger, but in which God promised to bless and prosper him, and in due time to give it to his posterity, who should multiply so as to become a great nation. This eminent patriarch having certain evidence, such as God can easily communicate, that the suggestion was of divine origin, and not the conceit of a wild imagination, placed entire confidence in the divine declaration, and with all his family and all his property he set out for this unknown country: as it is related in the Mosaic history, Gen. xii. 1—5.

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs with him of the same promise. 9.

It appears from the history (Gen. xii. 6, &c.), that soon after Abraham's arrival in Canaan, God appeared to him and made a solemn promise to him that to his seed he would give the land. Relying upon this promise, the patriarch remained, and passed his life there with his wife and family, with Isaac his son, and Jacob his grandson; in whose line the promise was continued and renewed. These eminent persons, however, never possessed any permanent property in the country, but resided in tents, moving from place to place as occasion required, with their wives and children, their servants and their cattle.

For he expected that city which hath foundations, whose framer and builder is God. 10.

And indeed we are not to suppose that the promise of the future prosperity and grandeur of his family was the only motive to Abraham's conduct, and the only foundation of his hope. Though we are not informed that the doctrine of a future life was expressly revealed to him, there can be no doubt that he lived in expectation of it, and that he reconciled his mind to the many inconveniencies of a wandering and unsettled state, by the prospect of admission into that glorious city which God himself has founded for the

Ch. XI. future everlasting residence of the righteous, and in comparison with which
Ver. 10. the firmest of terrestrial edifices are perishing and transitory things.

(2.) Both Abraham and Sarah manifested an exemplary faith in the divine promise concerning the birth of Isaac, ver. 11, 12.

11. *By faith Sarah¹ herself also received strength to conceive², even when she was past age, because she judged him who had made the promise*
12. *faithful. So that there descended, even from one, and him too become as dead³, a posterity, in multitude as the stars of heaven, and innumerable as the sand upon the sea shore.*

Sarah was ninety, and Abraham a hundred years of age, when the promise was made that they should have a son to whom the promise should descend, and in whose posterity it should be fulfilled. Improbable as this event was in itself, yet as soon as they were convinced that the promise was truly divine they yielded their full assent to it, and, as a reward of their faith, the promise was fulfilled in its utmost extent, in the birth of Isaac and the unparalleled increase and prosperity of his descendants in succeeding generations.

(3.) The author digresses to observe that the main object of the faith of the ancient patriarchs was the happiness of a future life, ver. 13—16.

13. *All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off⁴, and having hailed them⁵, they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the land⁶.*

¹ *By faith Sarah.*] Sarah did not at first believe (Gen. xviii. 13, 14); but, no doubt, when she was convinced that the promise was divine, she gave credit to it. "Her laughter was an indication, not of unbelief, but that she was greatly pleased. So Abraham laughed Gen. xvii. 6." Sykes. But the learned writer forgets that Sarah was reproved for her laughter and doubting.

² *To conceive.*] The received text adds *ετεκεν*, *was delivered*; but this word is wanting in the Alexandrine, Clermont, and other manuscripts, and is omitted by Griesbach and Newcome.

³ *Become as dead.*] How, then, came Abraham after this to have children by Keturah? Gen. xxv. 1. Mr. Hallett concludes that Keturah was a concubine of Abraham before he left Chaldea: which is, indeed, not improbable.

⁴ *Seen them afar off.*] The received text adds, *και πεισθεντες*, *were persuaded of them*: which words are wanting in the Alexandrine and other manuscripts, and in the Syriac, Æthiopic, and other versions, and are left out of the text by Griesbach and Newcome.

⁵ *Having hailed them.*] "Having with joy saluted them at a distance: a fine image." Newcome.

⁶ *Confessed that they were strangers.*] "Who died in faith? The answer is, Not only Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, but all their descendants to the days of Moses. Yet, notwithstanding the promise, none of them received that land; but were fully persuaded that the promise would some time or other be made good. Abraham owned himself a stranger, Gen. xxiii. 4, to the sons of Heth. Jacob calls his whole life a pilgrimage, Gen. xlvii. 9." Sykes.

These holy descendants of Abraham, to whom the promise that the land of Canaan should be given to their posterity was repeatedly renewed, passed their lives in cheerful dependence on the divine declaration, though they did not, and indeed could not, reasonably expect to live to see the performance of it. But entertaining no doubt of the accomplishment of the promise at the appointed season, they triumphed in the glorious though distant prospect, and reconciled themselves to present temporary inconveniences, by the assured expectation of the future glory and felicity of their descendants. In the mean time they thought and spoke of themselves as strangers and sojourners in the land of Canaan, and in this world in general: thus the venerable patriarch, when introduced to Pharaoh, speaks of the days of the years of his own life, and of the lives of his pious ancestors, as the season of his and their pilgrimage. Gen. xlvii. 9. Ch. XI.
Ver. 13.

Now they who speak thus show plainly that they are seeking for their native country⁷. And if indeed they had meant that which they had left, they might have found an opportunity of returning thither. But they were earnestly desirous of a better, that is, a heavenly country⁸. Therefore God is not ashamed to call himself their God⁹, because he hath prepared for them a city. 14.
15.
16.

The great object of the faith and hope of our pious ancestors was not solely the glory of their posterity, but a future happy and immortal existence to themselves. And their faith was similar to ours, though it was not founded in that clear and distinct revelation which God hath vouchsafed to us. The proof of this fact lies in narrow compass. They professed themselves sojourners and pilgrims in the country where they dwelt. They sought there-

⁷ *That they are seeking for their native country.*] πατρίδα. So Wakefield. See Newcome's margin. "Whilst they declare they seek a country, it is plain they have not a country. Abraham was in Canaan, Jacob in Egypt, where they called themselves strangers. If they meant that they had a home, a place where they had a right to be, they had time: they might have returned. But in truth they thought of a full possession of their own, where the promise of God was to be made good." Sykes.

⁸ *A heavenly country.*] "They knew that God cannot lye nor deceive; and yet Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, notwithstanding the particular promises made to them, received nothing that could be called a reward. They had not any possession in Canaan; no, not a place to set their foot on, Acts vii. 5. Could any thing then be more natural, than to turn their thoughts upon some place very different from the place they lived in? and therefore they expected and desired a heavenly city, a place of sure reward." Sykes.

⁹ *Is not ashamed to call himself their God.*] "But he would have been ashamed, humanly speaking, if he had not provided for them an abiding city, an everlasting life." Newcome.—"Οὐκ ἐνταύχυστα αὐτοῖς, wherefore God does not make them ashamed, in being called their God. Had they absolutely had no reward, it would have been matter of shame and folly in them to have called God their God." Sykes.

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Ver. 16.

fore and were anxious to go home to their true country: not indeed to Chaldea, from whence they came, for had that been their purpose and their wish, they might easily have found means of returning thither. The country, therefore, to which they looked must have been a far better region than Canaan or Chaldea. The object of their intense desire, and pursuit, was that celestial country where their God and Father dwells and reigns, and where they hoped to live in happiness and glory to endless ages.

Nor was this hope without just foundation: for, though the doctrine of a future life be not the main object of the Mosaic dispensation, and is no where explicitly revealed in it, yet there are many oblique intimations of it for the encouragement and consolation of suffering virtue. Amongst other arguments, one of the most convincing and affecting is, that God solemnly announces himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, and of their posterity, and that even after these patriarchs had been long in their graves. But this high and endearing relation he would have thought it a disgrace to have owned, had he not intended something better for them than what they actually possessed during their pilgrimage through life. But because he has provided a state of pure and perfect and everlasting happiness for them, he therefore glories in the character and title of their God, being fully resolved to fulfill in their utmost extent all the engagements and the claims of this high and honourable relation.

The persons of whom the author speaks must be the descendants of Abraham previously to their being reduced to a state of bondage in Egypt; for after that time it was not in their power, had they been ever so much disposed to it, to have returned to Chaldea. The argument he uses is exactly parallel to that which our Lord states, Luke xx. 37, 38, to convince the Sadducees of the doctrine of the resurrection. The justice of it cannot be questioned; but how far the patriarchs could see the force of this reasoning may perhaps be doubted. Upon the whole, however, though the object of the Mosaic dispensation was to teach the Unity of God, and not the doctrine of a future life, it can hardly be supposed that these virtuous patriarchs would be left in total ignorance of a doctrine so necessary to their moral improvement, their encouragement and their consolation.

(4.) The writer proceeds to illustrate the faith of Abraham in his obedience to the command to offer up Isaac, ver. 17—19.

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac¹; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son²; even he to whom it had been declared³, In Isaac thy posterity shall be called⁴: reasoning with himself⁵ that God was able even to raise him from the dead, whence he had also, comparatively speaking, received him⁶.

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Ver. 17.
18.
19.

¹ *Offered up Isaac.*] I quite agree with Hallett, that God had as perfect a right to take away the life of Isaac as a victim upon the altar as by a common disease, or any other means; also, that God had an unquestionable right to put the faith of his father to the severe trial of requiring him to officiate as the priest upon the occasion: I am also ready to admit that Abraham, having clearly ascertained that it was a divine command, was not only perfectly innocent but highly meritorious in his ready obedience to a precept so harsh and painful; and finally, that a case so extraordinary as this would give no encouragement to human sacrifices, and could not reasonably be pleaded as a precedent for this purpose; and that it served in its peculiar circumstances as a memorable example of faith and submission to the will of God in this venerable patriarch. Still, however, it is an idea so improbable, so revolting, so unlike any thing and every thing in the divine character and dispensations, that a father should be required to sacrifice his own son upon the altar, that notwithstanding the testimony of the book of Genesis, appealed to as it is by the author of this epistle, whose authority, however, is of little value, I must acknowledge that I feel great doubt as to the reality of the fact. It is possible that the historian may only mean to relate a visionary scene; as it is generally allowed that some scenes are such which are described in the prophets as historic facts. Or, possibly, it may be a figurative way of representing that the life of Isaac, the heir of the promise, had by some means or other been exposed to extreme danger, in a situation in which the father had shown great fortitude, and an unwavering confidence in the divine promise.

² *His only-begotten son.*] *μονογενῆς* not literally an only son: Abraham had Ishmael by Hagar, and others by Keturah. But Isaac was his only son by Sarah, or the only heir of the promise: having been himself the object of a promise, and through whom the promises were to descend: the best beloved son. By the evangelist John, and by him alone, the epithet is applied to Christ; not as indicating any mysterious generation from the Father, for then, why should it not have been used by the other sacred writers? but merely as synonymous to *beloved, chosen, &c.* See John i. 14, 18, iii. 16, 18, 1 John iv. 9. See Schleusner.

³ *Even he to whom.*] *προς ὃν*. So Newcome. "*Cui promissum erat, ex Isaaco habebis posteritatem.*" Rosenmuller. "that only son of whom it had been declared," &c. Wakefield and others.

⁴ *In Isaac shall thy posterity be called.*] "*ex Isaaco habebis posteritatem*, Gen. xxi. 12. *κληθῆναι, esse; verba enim nominalia sæpe sunt realia.*" Rosenmuller. "That is, that the posterity of Isaac should be accounted the seed of Abraham, and be made God's peculiar people." Hallett. "Thy posterity will be derived from Isaac." Wakefield.

⁵ *Reasoning with himself.*] *λογισαμενος*. So Wakefield. "Abraham knew that the promise was made, and he knew who it was that had made it, and therefore he had no doubt that it would be made good." Sykes.

⁶ *From whence he also, comparatively speaking, received him.*] "*εν παραβολῃ*, in a parenthesis (*ut ita dicam*). The English expression (*comparatively speaking*) answers to the Greek." Markland, Bowyer. "In a manner: *similitudine quadam*. By Isaac's miraculous birth, Abraham had, as it were, received him from the dead." Newcome. "And indeed from a like condition he at first received him." Wakefield. "Sarah was, as to her having children, comparatively speaking, dead before Isaac was conceived. If God, therefore, gave him at first in an extraordinary manner, he might, in order to make good his word, restore him in some extraordinary manner." Sykes. "This interpretation of Isaac's being born after Abraham was reckoned dead (says Hallett) cannot be right: the apostle does not speak of Abraham's being dead, but of Isaac's being dead and then raised. Also, Abraham's receiving Isaac from the dead is plainly subsequent to his offering him up. Isaac, then, was raised, and in a figure: not in a literal sense, inasmuch as he was not actually put to death. But here was, as it were, a

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Ver. 19.

It is related of our pious ancestor Abraham, Gen. xxii., that his faith in the promises was put to a very extraordinary trial. He was required to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering to God upon Mount Moriah. And having the most undoubted evidence that this was a divine requisition, without any hesitation he obeyed the terrible injunction: he took his son to the appointed spot, he built the altar, he laid the wood, and he bound the victim: and this virtuous parent, to whom so many promises had been made of a numerous and flourishing posterity, was just about to plunge the fatal knife into the bosom of this darling son, the only child of his mother, the child of promise, the very person who had been marked out as the chosen seed with whom the covenant was made, and to whose descendants the promise was limited, Gen. xxi. 12, had not the deadly stroke been averted by a supernatural interposition at the very instant when it was about to have been given. Such was the strength of Abraham's faith, that he firmly believed that all which had been promised would be faithfully and literally performed, even though his son should have suffered death in such circumstances by the hand of his father. For he reasoned thus justly with himself: The power of God was able to raise his dead son to life again, and that he certainly would do it rather than that any one of his promises should fail to receive its complete accomplishment. And the venerable man was the more encouraged in forming this conclusion, by the recollection that the birth of Isaac, from parents so far advanced in years, was itself equivalent to a rising from the dead; and he who could introduce him into existence in circumstances so extraordinary, was equally able to restore life after a short suspension of existence. And indeed, the rescue of Isaac by the miraculous interposition of the angel, at the very instant when his father's hand was lifted up to strike the fatal blow, was itself little less than the resurrection of the hallowed victim, and a restoration from a state of death to the

resurrection, or the figure of a resurrection. In the same figurative sense Abraham is said to have offered him up." "*παράβολη*, *discrimen*, *præsentissimum vitæ periculum*, *α παράβαλλεσθαι*, *quod interdum est periculo se objicere, et exponere. Vid. Suid. et Hesych. Heb. xi. 19, ubi Abrahamus filium suum vivum recepisse dicitur εν παράβολη* h. e. *in ipso præsentissimo vitæ periculo, seu, quod eodem redit præter omnem spem et expectationem.*" Schleusner.

"If Abraham had not had the firmest faith in the power of God to raise Isaac from the dead, he would not have shown his faith," says Dr. Priestley, "by the sacrifice of his son: a thing to which he must have had the greatest possible reluctance, and he did it without any reluctance or hesitation that appears in the history. After such an act of obedience, subsequent to that of abandoning his country and going he knew not whither, on the simple command of God, it is no wonder that he obtained the title of the *father of the faithful*, or the pattern of all believers."

arms and heart of his fond and agonized parent, whose faith must now be more than ever confirmed in the divine promise. Thus he was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and exhibiting to the virtuous in all succeeding ages a pattern of rational and cheerful confidence in God, in circumstances the most difficult and distressing, and of the good effects of such a firm and practical faith.

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Ver. 19.

(5.) The writer celebrates the faith of Isaac, ver. 20.

By faith Isaac¹ blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things future.

20.

The history (Gen. xxvii.) relates that Isaac, advanced in life, and blind with age, confiding in the promise of God to himself, and to his father, pronounced a blessing upon both his sons, foretelling, in the spirit of prophecy, that the posterity of Esau should for a time be in subjection to the descendants of Jacob. It was indeed far from the old patriarch's intention to have pronounced the better blessing upon the younger brother. But the artful contrivance of Rebekah, and the lying fraud of Jacob, imposed upon the poor blind father, and Jacob by stealth obtained the blessing before Esau was ready to receive it; and when pronounced it was too late to recall it. The old patriarch, recollecting probably that it had been foretold before they were born, that the elder should serve the younger, refused to retract the blessing which had been so surreptitiously obtained, and confirmed the boon, not as a reward of the hypocrisy, treachery, and falsehood of Jacob, which deserved the severest animadversion, but as a token of submission to a prior divine designation in which it was his duty to acquiesce.

(6.) He celebrates the faith of Jacob, ver. 21.

¹ *By faith Isaac.*] Nothing could be more unreasonable or incredible than the supposition that the descent of the divine promise should be made to depend upon the unjust partiality of a doting old man, upon the wicked machinations of an artful woman, upon the lying fraud of a deceitful boy, or, finally, upon the brute force, agility and skill of a half savage, in the sports of the field. And in fact the history states that this important question had been settled long before; and that previously to the birth of the twins, when, as the apostle observes, Rom. ix. 12, neither of them could possibly have done either good or evil, the oracle had expressly entailed the promise upon Jacob, and declared that the elder should serve the younger, Gen. xxv. 22, 23. Isaac was grossly mistaken if he thought that it would be in his power to reverse the order of providence. And perhaps, when he found himself tricked out of his intention by the base conspiracy of Rebekah and Jacob, it might bring to his mind the solemn declaration of the Divine Being before the children were born, and might make him more resolute in resisting the importunities of Esau, however indignant he might be at the deceit which had been practised upon him, and at the parties concerned in the conspiracy.

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Ver. 21.

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped leaning upon the top of his staff.

To this aged patriarch it was revealed that the two sons of Joseph should be the heads of two distinct tribes in Israel, and that the posterity of the younger son should be more numerous and powerful than those of the elder: this he announced to the youths themselves when they came to receive his dying blessing, placing Ephraim before Manasseh in a way which gave offence to Joseph their father, who was partial to his first-born. But the patriarch refused to withdraw his hand, confiding in the spirit of prophecy with which he was then inspired: and when he had finished the prophetic benediction, he bowed his hoary head upon the staff which supported his tottering limbs, in token of grateful adoration to that Being who disposes all things according to his pleasure, and who, at the last stage of his wearisome pilgrimage, had permitted his eyes to be closed by that son who was the darling of his heart, whom he had long mourned over as lost, but who was now restored to him in circumstances the most prosperous and splendid, and in a season the most critical and important, whose children he embraced, and the future prosperity of whose family he had then foretold, Gen. xlviii.

(7.) The author notices the faith of Joseph, ver. 22.

22. *By faith Joseph, at the end of life, mentioned the departure of the children of Israel, and gave a charge concerning his bones*¹.

This excellent man survived his venerable parent many years, and died at last in a good old age, crowned with the blessings of a people whom he had saved from famine, and who had flourished under his prudent administration, and of his own family, whose ill usage of him he had requited with tenderness and beneficence. But all the honours he had enjoyed in Egypt had not obliterated the memory of the promise of God to his ancestors: he died in the firm expectation that the posterity of Israel would in due time be put in possession of the land of Canaan; and with his latest breath he solemnly adjured them at that time to carry his remains with them, and to deposit

¹ *Concerning his bones.*] "Joseph ordered that he should not be buried in Egypt, but only embalmed there in the manner practised in that country; by which bodies were reduced to a state like wood, and rendered as incorruptible. Such bodies are now called *mummies*, and they are all brought from Egypt. Joseph gave these orders that in this state he might be carried along with them when they left that country, and nothing could express a stronger faith in the divine promise, that the land of Canaan was designed for them while they were detained in Egypt." Dr. Priestley.

them in the burying-place of his pious ancestors, Gen. l. 25; which charge was punctually obeyed when the appointed season arrived. Thus this virtuous patriarch stands upon record as a memorable example that elevation of station does not universally efface the principles of piety; and that habits of virtue, early contracted and firmly fixed, may be preserved inviolable even amidst the cares of government, and the temptations of a court.

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Ver. 22.

(8.) The author celebrates the faith of the parents of Moses, ver. 23.

By faith Moses², when he was born, was concealed three months by his parents, because they saw that he was a graceful child, and they were not deterred³ by the commandment of the king. 23.

The next instance of laudable and practical faith that I shall mention is that of the parents of Moses, who, trusting in the wise and powerful providence of God, so far disregarded the authority of the savage tyrant of Egypt, who had ordered every male child to be put to death, that at the hazard of their own lives they concealed Moses, whose infant beauty had excited the yearnings of parental affection in a more than ordinary degree, for three months in their own dwelling. After which, in reliance upon the same divine protection, they committed the little helpless innocent to an ark of bulrushes, and placed it where Pharaoh's daughter was accustomed to bathe, hoping that Providence would in some way or other accomplish its deliverance, which happened agreeably to their wishes, and crowned their pious faith with a rich reward; the mother of the child being appointed its nurse.

(9.) The writer celebrates the faith of Moses in renouncing the splendour of the Egyptian court, and choosing to associate with his persecuted countrymen, ver. 24—27.

By faith Moses, after he was grown up, refused to call himself the son 24.

² *By faith Moses.*] Exod. ii. 1—3. Josephus relates that God appeared to Amram the father of Moses in a dream, and promised him a son who should deliver the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage. To this tradition, whether true or false, which no doubt was current at the time, the writer of this epistle seems to allude. Faith in this promise encouraged these pious parents to conceal their child notwithstanding the personal danger which they incurred by it. Joseph. Ant. lib. ii. c. 9, sect. 5. See Macknight.

³ *They were not deterred.*] Gr. *they did not fear*, i. e. they did not so fear the tyrant's authority as to be deterred from concealing the infant for three months: but afterwards their fears induced them to expose it. Mr. Wakefield renders the words "in defiance of the order of the king."

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of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer cruel treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin¹ for a short time².

Moses was brought up in Pharaoh's court as the son of Pharaoh's daughter; he was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and excelled both in arts and arms. He might, had he followed the dictates of ambition, have aspired to the throne: but his pious parents, by whom he was educated, had no doubt instructed him in the secret of his birth, and in the promises of God to his renowned ancestors. When therefore he had reached his fortieth year, he renounced the honours of the court, and publicly professed himself a citizen of the despised and insulted Hebrew nation, protecting his countrymen from injury while he retained his authority in the land, and escaping into the wilderness when his zeal for the rights of his countrymen had excited the jealousy of the Egyptian tyrant. For he preferred suffering persecution with the worshipers of the living and true God, to all the honours, dignities, and privileges, he could have enjoyed in an idolatrous court, the crimes and unexampled tyranny of which he foresaw must soon draw down the vengeance of the Almighty.

26. *Esteeming the reproach of the chosen people³ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked forward to the reward⁴.*

¹ *Pleasures of sin.*] Sin here seems to be put for the idolatry of Egypt, with which it would have been necessary for Moses to have complied, in order to have retained his station in the Egyptian court. It does not at all appear that any other violation of rectitude is intended by the expression.

² *A short time.*] Exod. ii. 11—14. Moses might infer from the declaration of God to Abraham, Gen. xv. 13, 14, in which, no doubt, he had been instructed by his pious parents, that the season fixed in the divine councils, for the deliverance of the Israelites and the punishment of their oppressors, was now at hand.

³ *The chosen people.*] *χριστῶν, i. e. ἀγίων, ver. 25, the anointed people.* The Israelites are called christs, or anointed, *i. e.* a chosen and consecrated people. Psalm cv. 15. Hab. iii. 13. "So that the reproach of Christ may be the reproach of the people of God." Whitby; which appears to me the most probable sense. "The sense may be, that Moses looked upon the contempt and indignity which he underwent from Pharaoh, on account of his professing himself a Jew, much preferable to all the riches and honours of Egypt." Sykes.

The reproach of Christ, "such as Christ suffered." Photius *ap.* Whitby, Newcome, Harwood. "the reproach of the Messiah." Wakefield. "the reproach he should suffer for his faith in a Messiah to come." Hallett. "the scoffs cast on the Israelites for expecting the Christ to arise among them." Macknight. "for acknowledging himself one of the Israelites whom Christ had taken under his peculiar protection." Doddridge. The great error is supposing Christ to be alluded to at all. But it is not improbable that the author, who likes to argue from verbal ambiguities, meant to avail himself of the double sense of the word Christ to insinuate that the Hebrews, to whom he was writing, ought to be as ready to sacrifice all for Christ the Messiah, and for the honours and rewards of his spiritual and everlasting kingdom, as their great lawgiver of old was to give up the splendour of Pharaoh's court, and to take his lot with the Christs, the anointed and chosen but despised and persecuted people of God in former times: to share in their reproach and danger, and to expect their reward.

⁴ *The reward.*] primarily, of sharing with the Israelites in the possession of Canaan under

He might have lived in wealth and splendour in the court of Egypt, and have enjoyed every blessing which fortune could bestow. Instead of which, he chose to cast his lot amongst a set of wretched and helpless exiles, destitute of all the common comforts of life, whose only privilege was, that they were chosen by and consecrated to God, and whose only treasure was, the promise made to their pious forefathers. These were the privileges, and these the possessions, which Moses wisely preferred to the wealth of Egypt. And in firm expectation that the promise of God would in due time be fulfilled, and that, if he should not live to see this glorious event, his own immortal interests would be secure, he willingly exposed himself to the disgrace which he must necessarily incur in the estimation of those who could not enter into his views and motives, and to whom his conduct must no doubt wear the appearance of absurdity and insanity.

By faith he left Egypt⁵, not deterred by the anger of the king⁶; for he remained firm as seeing him who is invisible.

27.

When Pharaoh heard that the zeal of Moses had transported him so far as to put to death an Egyptian for oppressing an Israelite, he was so offended that he threatened to put Moses himself to death. But such was the interest which this great man then had in the court of Egypt, that he might no doubt easily have obtained a pardon had he returned to his allegiance: but he had renounced the grandeur of a court, and had made up his mind to all the consequences of his virtuous choice. Confiding therefore in the promise and in the providence of God, this pious chief defied the resentment of Pharaoh; and supported by a consciousness of integrity, and trusting in the guidance of that powerful Being who, though invisible, was the great

the protection of divine providence. But as all the patriarchs are said to have sought a heavenly country, this expectation also may be alluded to here as the object of the desire and hope of Moses. "he looked off from them to the retribution." Macknight. "he was looking onward to his reward." Wakefield.

⁵ *By faith he left Egypt.*] "This," says Dr. Priestley, "is perhaps ascribing too much to the faith of Moses: he evidently fled for fear of his life. It is probable, indeed, that he was a pious man, and consequently had respect to him who is invisible, to the presence and providence of God; but at that time he does not appear to have had any intercourse with God, and therefore he had no promise respecting himself, as a foundation for any particular faith in God."

⁶ *Deterred by.*] Gr. *not fearing the anger of the king.* It is so expressly said, Exod. ii. 14, 15, that, when Moses fled into the Desert, he was afraid, that many expositors, viz. Hallett, Doddridge, Macknight, &c., explain this passage as referring to his last interview with Pharaoh, or to his triumphant departure from Egypt when he led the Israelites through the Red Sea. But the order of the discourse naturally leads us to understand it of his first escape from Egypt, to which this expression will be no objection if we translate the words *notwithstanding*, or, with Mr. Wakefield, "in defiance of the anger of the king." See note on ver. 23.

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Ver. 27.

(10.) He celebrates the faith of Moses and the Israelites in their observance of the first passover, ver. 28.

28. *By faith he kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, that he who destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians¹ might not touch theirs.*

To Moses and Aaron God revealed his intention of destroying in one night all the first-born of the Egyptians, both of man and beast, Exod. xii. And to them he gave it in charge to direct the Israelites to kill a lamb, or a kid, in the afternoon of the preceding day, to roast and eat it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, as a memorial of their severe bondage in Egypt, and their hasty departure from it, and to sprinkle the blood upon the door-posts of their houses, as a symbol of protection from the destroying angel. Upon these conditions it was promised that their own families should escape the dreadful catastrophe. Relying, therefore, upon the declaration and promises of God, Moses delivered and the Israelites obeyed the mandate. Nor were they disappointed in their expectations. At midnight a lamentable and universal outcry was heard in the houses of the Egyptians; for all their first-born were instantaneously cut off, from the eldest son of the monarch, and the heir of his crown, to the first-born of the poorest tenant of the cottage: but in the houses of the Israelites, under the protection of the Almighty, all was safe: their faith was their security; and the immediate consequence of this terrible visitation was their release from a servitude of four hundred years.

(11.) The author commemorates the faith of the Israelites in their passage through the Red Sea, ver. 29.

29. *By faith the Israelites passed through the Red Sea² as on dry land, which the Egyptians attempted, and were swallowed up.*

¹ Of the Egyptians.] See Worsley's Translation of the New Testament.

² *Through the Red Sea.*] Whether the passage through the Red Sea were a supernatural event, as most expositors have maintained, or whether, as Dr. Geddes and some of the German commentators contend, Moses, having acquired a knowledge of the situation of the sands during his long residence in the wilderness, took advantage of the ebb tide to conduct the Israelites over the sands, where Pharaoh and his host for want of information perished, it is certain that it is represented by the historian, and was believed by the Jews to have been, a proper miracle, and as such it is alluded to by the author of this epistle, and his reasoning is founded upon this supposition. See Geddes's *Crit. Remarks on Exod. xiv.*

Dr. Geddes has succeeded but ill, however ingenious many of his criticisms are, in his at-

Another remarkable instance of faith in the divine promise, which also received its proper reward, was that of our ancestors the Israelites under the conduct of Moses, in their passage through the Red Sea, the history of which is related in Exod. xiv. The Egyptians, mad with rage, notwithstanding the calamities which they had endured by immediate divine infliction, and exasperated, rather than humbled, by the recent disaster of the death of the first-born, with their infatuated monarch at their head, pursued the Israelites in their march, resolving to reduce them again into bondage,

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tempts to explain away the miracles of Moses. Indeed, as he denies all supernatural communications to the Jewish lawgiver, and his divine legation altogether, it is necessary to his hypothesis to get rid of the miracles. But if the fact be admitted, which it seems impossible to deny, that the theism of the Jews was beyond all comparison superior to that of their more cultivated and polished neighbours, this fact can only be accounted for through immediate divine communications, which, as their history relates, were vouchsafed to Moses: and if Moses were the medium of divine communications, it is probable that he was authorized to work miracles. Difficulties and objections may be started against particular facts, which it may not be easy to obviate, nor is it necessary. For the law, having performed its office as a pædagogus to bring us to Christ, is now discharged; and as Christians, it is sufficient for us to believe that the Jewish institution in its pure and uncorrupted form was of divine original; that its main design was to support in the world the great doctrine of the Divine Unity, and to prepare the way for the dispensation of the Messiah; and finally, that the books of the Old Testament contain many prophetic declarations, which either have received or will receive their proper accomplishment in their appointed season.

"In all these transactions," says Dr. Priestley, "which were of a most wonderful nature, no doubt Moses and all pious Israelites were actuated by a proper faith in God. If the state of the Israelites in Egypt be considered, when they were numerous indeed, but unarmed and defenceless, their masters powerful and warlike, themselves without any friend from without, and the country for which they looked possessed by nations perhaps more warlike than the Egyptians themselves, with a wilderness to travel through, in which such a multitude could not naturally have subsisted a single week; if it be considered that notwithstanding these circumstances, and all the opposition which the Egyptians could give to the Israelites, they nevertheless actually did leave Egypt, passed forty years in that wilderness, and then took possession of the land of Canaan, it must be evident that there must have been some miracle in the case.

"The history of Moses makes all these transactions perfectly credible; but every other hypothesis must be utterly inadequate to account for the known facts. It is impossible to read the history of Moses without perceiving the most undeniable traces of its being written at the time of the transactions. It is in some places almost a journal of the proceedings of every day, with such a particular mention of persons and places, as are never found except in authentic histories. The books of Moses were also received as genuine and faithful narratives of events by the whole Jewish nation; who in all their apostasies never entertained a doubt of the truth of their contents. This belief could only have been produced by the most satisfactory evidence. An attempt to impose upon a nation the belief of any thing similar to this, would be treated with ridicule, and could not succeed in any degree."

How far these arguments may satisfy a dispassionate inquirer that the Pentateuch was wholly written by Moses, and that every fact is to be received as true, must be left to the reader's own judgement. The safer course appears to be, after having inferred the divine legation of Moses from the perfection of Jewish theism, to consider how far we are warranted by evidence to receive the whole Pentateuch as written or dictated by Moses himself; and to inquire whether all the facts recorded are equally authentic; and by what criteria we may separate those which are worthy of entire confidence, from those which are of a doubtful or suspicious aspect.

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or to perish in the attempt. The Israelites, inclosed in the wilderness between their enraged pursuers and the sea, forgetful of all past interpositions in their favour, gave up themselves for lost, and began to murmur against their venerable leader: but Moses soon cheered their spirits, and restored their confidence in divine protection, by the promise that Jehovah would fight the battle for them. And when he ordered them to advance, and to continue their march even into the sea itself, relying upon the promise that they should pass safely through, they cheerfully obeyed; and the laws of nature being suspended by the divine energy, the waters divided to make a passage for them, and rising on each side like a wall of adamant, the armies of Israel marched through upon dry ground. Far different was the fate of Pharaoh and his host: they likewise boldly rushed into the divided sea, believing probably that this phenomenon was nothing more than the natural effect of the violent wind; and imagining themselves as safe as the fugitives whom they pursued: but they soon learned their error to their cost; for no sooner were the chosen people safely landed upon the opposite shore than the rod of Moses, under the direction of the Almighty, restoring the suspended law of nature, the element instantly resumed its fluidity, and overwhelmed the Egyptian host in universal and undistinguished ruin.

(12.) The writer mentions the faith of the Israelites with respect to the destruction of Jericho, ver. 30.

30. *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after a procession round them¹ for seven days.*

¹ *A procession round them.*] See Wakefield's Translation, Josh. vi. The justification of the Israelites in the conquest of Canaan very much depends upon the truth of this fact: if a miracle was actually wrought to give them possession of Jericho, it was a public proof that this people in their invasion of Canaan, and the extermination of the inhabitants, acted under a divine commission. This would completely save their character. With regard to the Supreme Being, the difficulty and its solution are precisely the same, whether the Israelites were divinely authorized, or not, to execute their bloody purpose. What God permits he ordains; whatever be the means, or whoever the instruments that he employs for the execution of his sovereign purpose. And he had just as good a right to exterminate these wicked nations, with whose aggravated crimes he had borne so long, by the sword of the Israelites, as by famine, pestilence, or earthquake. And this mode of extermination possessed the further advantage, that it served as an awful warning to their successors to avoid the crimes of the people whom they had extirpated, that so they might escape their doom. See Macknight's note.

I shall further take leave to observe, that whether God did commission the Israelites to exterminate the Canaanites, according to the account in the Jewish history, or not, that history is at least consistent with itself: and it does not attribute this terrible commission to the chosen people, without at the same time affording evidence of it sufficient to satisfy and silence even the sufferers themselves. If it was true, as related in the history, that the Israelites were by a

When the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, armed with the terrible commission to exterminate the inhabitants both old and young, and to take possession of the country, it was absolutely necessary that there should be a solemn public indisputable attestation of the divine authority under which they acted. With this view, and to notify and establish their claim beyond all possibility of doubt, they were prohibited from using any military operations in their attack upon Jericho, the first fortified town at which they arrived; and were assured that without any efforts of their own it should be delivered into their hands. To this end the priests were required to carry the ark every day, for six days, in solemn procession, with sound of trumpet, once round the city; and on the seventh day to carry it round seven times in the same manner: and after the seventh time, the people were commanded to raise a loud shout while the trumpets were sounding, when it was promised that the wall of the city should instantly fall down: upon which they were required immediately to go straight forward, to take possession, and to execute faithfully their stern commission. They believed the promise, they obeyed the order, they gained possession of the city, and they exterminated the inhabitants. But if they had not placed confidence in God, they could not have succeeded in their enterprize.

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(13.) The writer shows the importance of faith in the escape of Rahab from the massacre of Jericho, ver. 31.

By faith Rahab the harlot² perished not with the unbelievers, having entertained the spies in peace.

31.

public incontestable miracle put into possession of Jericho, it must be allowed that they are to be regarded as the authorized executioners of divine justice. How far the authority of the history is sufficient to establish this fact, is quite a different question. I must, however, take the liberty to observe, that it does not appear to me to be a greater mystery in providence, or a problem of more difficult solution, that the Israelites should by supernatural authority be commissioned to exterminate the Canaanites, than that conquerors in all ages should be allowed, in the natural course of things, to lay waste the countries which they subdue. In fact, the difficulty with regard to the divine government is precisely the same, whether the Israelites were or were not authorized to destroy the Canaanites: for, whatever takes place in the ordinary course of things is as truly appointed by God as any supernatural event. All is his agency: in one case he acts by established rules, in the other by a deviation from them.

² *Rahab the harlot.*] Josh. iv. 25. I am much inclined to agree with those Jewish and Christian writers who think that *πορνή*, when applied to Rahab, does not signify a prostitute. It is commonly understood by them to mean a keeper of a house of entertainment. Perhaps it means an idolatress: *q. d.* though Rahab had been a poor heathen idolatress, yet in this instance she believed in Jehovah, and was benefited by her belief, which was the means of saving herself and her family from destruction. It is generally admitted that Rahab was afterwards married to Salmon the ancestor of David, Matt. i. 5. But Dr. Geddes expresses a doubt whether this Rahab was the same person as Rahab the harlot, as she is called. See his note on Josh. ii. 1.

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Ver. 31.

The last case that I shall particularly notice, as illustrating in a striking manner the excellence and importance of faith, is that of Rahab, who though an ignorant, and perhaps once an immoral heathen, was nevertheless convinced, by the report which she had heard of the wonders which God had wrought for the Israelites in the wilderness, that Jehovah was the true God, that Israel was his chosen people, that he would certainly give them a complete triumph over their enemies, and that he would put them in possession of the land of Canaan. Under this persuasion, she hospitably entertained the two men who were sent to bring an account of the country to Joshua, and concealed them from their pursuers, upon condition that they should spare her and her family when they obtained possession of the town. This promise they made and faithfully performed; and this poor woman not only escaped with her family from the destruction of her native city, but was afterwards married to a person of rank in the Hebrew nation, and from her descended, not only a line of illustrious princes, but in process of time the great Messiah himself.

(14.) The writer concludes his catalogue of illustrious examples of faith, by a brief recapitulation of the exploits and sufferings of many other eminent persons, upon which time does not permit him to enlarge, ver. 32—40.

1.] He commemorates some who in virtue of faith performed extraordinary exploits, ver. 32—35.

32. *And what shall I say further? For time would fail me to discourse concerning Gideon¹, and Barak², and Sampson³, and Jephthah⁴, and David,*

But it is certain that she was contemporary with Salmon the son of Nahshon, Numb. ii. 3, and there does not appear to have been any other person of note of the same name. See Hallett on the text. "Rahab the hostess escaped among those who would not be persuaded." Wakefield.

¹ *Gideon.*] See the history of Gideon, Judges vi.—viii. : confiding in the divine promise, he is said, with a body of three hundred Israelites, to have surprised and routed an army of a hundred and thirty-five thousand Midianites.

² *Barak,*] depending upon the promise of God by Deborah, with comparatively a small force defeated the vast army of Jabin, Judg. iv.

³ *Sampson.*] His history is well known. Judg. xiii.—xvi. The particular effect of faith here alluded to seems to have been the demolition of the house of Dagon and the destruction of the Philistines at his death, Judg. xvi. 28, in answer to his prayer.

⁴ *Jephthah,*] whose history is related Judg. xi. He believed in the deliverances which God had wrought for Israel in former ages, and encouraged himself in the hope that God would still protect them. His vow was a foolish one: but it is utterly incredible that he should ever have thought of sacrificing his daughter to Jehovah, or should have been permitted to perform such a vow, if he had been wicked enough to make it. She was devoted to God, and bound to perpetual virginity, which in those days was considered as a great calamity: it was peculiarly such in the case of Jephthah's daughter, as she was an only child.

and Samuel, and the prophets; who through faith struggled successfully against kingdoms, wrought deliverance⁵, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the rage of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became strong from weakness, were valiant in war, put to flight the armies⁶ of foreign nations, received for women their dead children brought to life again⁷.

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34.

35.

From the creation of the world to the invasion of Canaan I have been enumerating some remarkable instances of the wonderful efficacy of faith in divine declarations and promises; but to proceed in this detail would occupy more time than I have to spare, and swell this epistle to an inconvenient size. I shall therefore satisfy myself with allusions to facts and circumstances which your intimate acquaintance with the history of your nation will easily bring to your recollection. I shall first remind you of some extraordinary actions which have been achieved by the heroes and champions of faith, who ventured upon many exploits in reliance upon a divine promise which in other circumstances they would not have presumed to attempt. Joshua exterminated the Canaanites, and settled Israel in the promised land: Gideon and Barak, Sampson and Jephthah, in the days when the Israelites were under the government of generals, judges, and high-priests, and when, from their proneness to idolatry, they were often defeated and for a time reduced into subjection by the neighbouring nations, were raised up by providence to deliver their country, and relying upon the promise and protection of the Almighty were crowned with extraordinary success. David, by his zeal against idolatry, obtained the promise that the kingdom should be established in his posterity, and that the Messiah⁸

⁵ *Wrought deliverance.*] δικαιοσυνην. Righteousness or justification is a phrase which often occurs in the writings of Paul, in the sense of deliverance from condemnation and death. In this connexion the heroes who delivered their country are said to have wrought *righteousness*, as they were the means of recovering their countrymen from those calamities in which their idolatry and apostasy had involved them. The word is used in the same sense as applied to Noah, ver. 7. See Wakefield.

⁶ *Put to flight,*] or, "overturned the camps of foreigners:" παρεμβολας εκλιναν αλλοτριων. See Macknight. See the case of Jonathan, 1 Sam. xiv. 6—20; of Gideon, Judg. vii. 13. Sennacherib's disaster is recorded 2 Kings xix.

⁷ *Received for women.*] γυναιξιν. "This most elegant reading," saith Mr. Wakefield, "far beyond the reach of transcribers, is preserved by the Syriac translator." The persons alluded to are, the widow of Sarepta, whose son was raised by Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 14; and the Shunamite whose dead son was raised to life by Elisha, 2 Kings iv. 20—37. Griesbach takes no notice of this reading.

⁸ *The Messiah.*] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—7, and Gray on the last words of David.

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should be numbered amongst his descendants: the prophet Daniel, confiding in God, escaped unhurt from the den of lions¹; and the three pious and zealous youths who courageously refused to bend the knee to the golden image set up by the tyrant of Babylon, were in vain exposed to the scorching flames of the fiery furnace, which, while it destroyed their executioners, was not permitted to singe a hair of their heads². Confiding in the protection of providence, the prophet Elijah boldly executed the duties of his mission, regardless of, and uninjured by the wrath of an incensed, idolatrous and revengeful queen³. Hezekiah, believing in the promise of God, communicated by the prophet Isaiah, recovered from a dangerous sickness, and fifteen years were added to his life⁴. Many of the heroes of the Hebrew nation distinguished themselves by their valour and success in battle; but the prince last mentioned, as the reward of his faith in the divine promise, was enabled to ransack and plunder the Assyrian camp⁵, through the aid of the destroying angel, who in one night swept away the greater part of Sennacherib's army by a pestilential blast: and to conclude, such is the efficacy of faith and prayer, that Elijah, the great reformer of Israel, restored to life the son of the widow of Sarepta⁶, at whose house he had resided during the famine; and his successor Elisha raised the son of the Shunamite⁷, who entertained and regarded him as a prophet of God⁸.

2.] The writer hints at the case of many whose faith supported them under the severest sufferings and torments, ver. 35—38.

36. *And some⁹ were tortured¹⁰, not accepting deliverance, that they might*

¹ Dan. vi. 22, 23.

² Dan. iii. 17, 18.

³ 1 Kings xix. 1, 2. See also Exod. xviii. 4.

⁴ Isa. xxxviii. 1—8.

⁵ Isa. xxxvii. 36, 2 Kings xix. 35.

⁶ 1 Kings xix. 19.

⁷ 2 Kings iv. 34.

⁸ Upon this account of the wonders performed by faith we may remark, that the writer's argument only extends to the efficacy of faith in particular cases: he does not say any thing concerning the general character of the persons whose faith he celebrates. Some of them seem to have been persons of very loose morals, and chargeable with great crimes. They were bad men, and yet were selected by divine providence to accomplish its own benevolent designs. And this is perfectly agreeable to the general analogy of the divine dispensations, though very different perhaps from what we should antecedently have judged expedient.

⁹ *And some.*] Most expositors understand the author of this epistle as alluding in this passage to the fortitude which the Jews displayed under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes; when many were put to death in severe tortures because they would not renounce their religion. The heroic conduct of Eleazar, and of the woman and her seven sons, is related in the sixth and seventh chapters of the second book of Maccabees. But Mr. Hallett thinks that no history is alluded to here but what is contained in the authentic Jewish scriptures.

obtain a better resurrection¹¹. And some experienced mockery and scourgings, bonds also, and imprisonments. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were impaled¹², they were slaughtered by the sword; they went about in sheepskins¹³ and in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, cruelly treated, (of whom the world was not worthy,) wandering in deserts and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth.

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37.

38.

The energy of faith is as conspicuous in supporting the mind under trials and sufferings, as in prompting men to deeds of heroism and renown. I have just mentioned that faith in the power of God, on some special occasions, enabled some distinguished prophets to raise children from the dead, and to restore them to their transported mothers. I now add, that some, relying with cheerful confidence on the promise and providence of God, have submitted to death in the most excruciating tortures, nobly disdaining to accept of life, and opulence, and honours, by violating conscience and apostatizing from the divine law. To this heroic resolution they were animated by the hope of a resurrection, not like that of these children to a frail and dying life, but to a life of everlasting felicity and glory. This was eminently the case with some who suffered under the bloody persecution of Antiochus. Others again, who were not exposed to martyrdom, were exercised with trials, almost or altogether, as difficult to endure. They were subjected to the most grievous insults, to scourging, and imprisonment, and chains; but faith triumphed over all. Of those who obtained the crown of martyrdom, some,

¹⁰ *Were tortured.*] *ετυμπανισθησαν*, "were tortured to death." Mr. Wakefield renders it, "were killed with clubs." The word is used both in a general sense and for a particular species of torture. See Hallett. 2 Macc. vi. 16, *τυμπανον*, *clava*, *baculus*, from *τυπτω*. Gataker; Newcome, who refers to Le Clerc on Hammond, and to H. Stephens.

¹¹ *A better resurrection.*] that is, than the resurrection of the children just mentioned, who were raised only to a frail and mortal life. That the Jews under Antiochus suffered torture and martyrdom in hope of a resurrection to immortal life, is evident from the account in 2 Macc. vii. 9, 11, 14, 23. "Thou, like a fury," exclaims one of the tortured youths to the inhuman tyrant, "takest us out of the present life; but the king of the world shall raise us up who have died for his laws, to everlasting life."

¹² *Were impaled.*] *επειρασθησαν*, from *πειραω*, *transfigo*. "they were pierced with stakes." See Wakefield and Newcome. Archbishop Newcome adds, that two MSS. and Syr. omit the word, with the approbation of many critics. Mill, Hallett, and Griesbach retain the common reading, *επειρασθησαν*, *they were tempted*, as best supported by ancient authorities, and well suiting the connexion. Hallett combats the arguments of Whitby, who conjectures that *επειρασθησαν* was inserted by some ignorant transcriber for *επρισθησαν*.

¹³ *In sheepskins.*] "i. e. in mean clothing." Newcome. Hallett observes, that "Elias is undoubtedly the instance which the writer had in his eye. It is said in our translation that he wore a mantle, 1 Kings xix. 13, 19, 2 Kings ii. 8, 13, 14; in all which places the Greek translator uses the word *μηλωτη*, a *sheepskin*." Clemens Romanus saith, "Let us imitate those that walked about preaching the coming of Christ in goats' skins and sheep's skins: I mean the prophets Elias, Elisha, and Ezekiel." See Harmer, vol. iv. p. 519.

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like Zechariah¹, were stoned to death; others, as Isaiah², were sawn asunder; others were impaled; and others, as the prophets of Jehovah, by the command of Jezebel were cut off by the sword³. To escape the fury of their persecutors they fled into deserts, wandered in wildernesses, and lived in caves⁴, clad with the meanest raiment, destitute, like Elijah, even of the necessities of life, and, like him, so cruelly treated by their enemies and persecutors that to them death was often preferable to life: yet such was the worth and excellence of these holy men, that the world, which treated them with so much inhumanity, was unworthy of being honoured with their residence in it, and the greatest blessings which that world could confer were infinitely short of their deserts. These holy men were the instructors and reformers of the age in which they lived; but their unwise contemporaries undervalued and neglected their instructions, and insulted and persecuted their best benefactors and friends: and such in all ages has been the spirit of ignorance, bigotry, and daring profligacy. Nevertheless, these virtuous confessors persevered in their honourable career; and, animated by the hope of future reward and of ultimate success, when they were no longer permitted to benefit their fellow-creatures by their instructions, they were contented to do it by their sufferings⁵.

3.] The writer concludes this catalogue of distinguished persons with remarking, that the faith which produced these extraordinary effects was exercised upon promises far less important than those which are now made to believers in Christ, ver. 39, 40.

¹ Zechariah.] See 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.

² Isaiah.] It is a tradition preserved both in the Babylonish and Jerusalem Talmuds, that the prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder by order of king Manasseh. This tradition is also mentioned by Justin Martyr and Jerome; and it is, says Hallett, universally agreed, that Isaiah is the person here referred to.

³ 1 Kings xix. 10, 14.

⁴ 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13, xix. 4.

⁵ By their sufferings.] The writer is generally thought, as I have before observed, to allude to the persecution of the Jews for their religion under Antiochus Epiphanes, the tyrant of Syria, in which many suffered death in extreme tortures. Particulars are related in the second book of Maccabees, ch. vi. vii. The suffering heroes were offered life, liberty, and every favour which the tyrant could bestow, if they would renounce their religion; but they spurned his offers, and joyfully submitted to insult and scourging, and death, triumphing in the hope of a resurrection to immortality. How they acquired this faith in a resurrection is very difficult to be accounted for, as it forms no part of the Mosaic revelation. It was probably a tradition, founded upon an ancient revelation. The notions, however, which the Jews entertained upon this subject were very imperfect when Christ appeared, by whose gospel alone life and immortality are brought to light.

*Now all these*⁶, *though they obtained an honourable testimony through faith, yet received not the promise, God having long ago provided something better for us, that they without us might not be complete*⁷.

Ch. XI.
Ver. 39.
40.

All these extraordinary men have a high character in the sacred history, because of the vigour and practical excellence of their faith. Yet, after all, the object of their faith was mean, and of little value, in comparison with ours. Most of these eminent persons expected nothing better than temporal deliverances and blessings: or, if they looked forward to a future life, their hope must have rested on a precarious foundation, and their best prospect was that of the promised Messiah; a promise, the accomplishment of which they were not permitted to see. This privilege was reserved for us who live under the dispensation of the Messiah, in whom we believe, and by whose mission and resurrection we are elevated to the assurance of a future life. To complete the illustrious catalogue of those who are entitled to high distinction on account of the achievements of their faith, it has pleased God that the names of believers in Jesus should also be added, whose exploits and sufferings, in virtue of faith in their honoured chief, will make a splendid addition to the achievements of former times; for they who enjoy peculiar privileges may reasonably be expected to distinguish themselves proportionably by honourable exertions.

⁶ *All these.*] This expression by no means implies, as Mr. Hallett seems to apprehend (see his note on ver. 32), that all the individuals mentioned or alluded to in this chapter were virtuous characters, and such as entitled them to the hope of salvation: they are only brought forward as examples of the efficacy of faith in specific instances. The victories of Jephthah and Sampson no more prove them to have been good men, than the miracles performed by Judas would prove him to be a true disciple of Jesus.

⁷ *Might not be complete.*] It is a strange conceit of Mr. Hallett's, that good men under the Mosaic dispensation continued after death in a state of insensibility till the coming of Christ: but that all good Christians when they die enter immediately upon a state of activity and happiness, and that this is the better thing provided for us. Nothing but the clearest revelation could establish a fact so highly improbable as this. The better thing provided for Christians is the actual advent of the Messiah as the object of faith; and the phalanx of those who have distinguished themselves by the energy and triumphs of their faith in former ages is represented as incomplete, till joined by the army of Christian worthies and confessors. "*something better for us: that is, the knowledge of the Messiah.*" Newcome.

"None of the people of old received, or could possibly know, how the promise was to be made good. All they could do was to expect and believe that it would be performed. But God foresaw and ordered matters so, that we should see the whole fulfilled. . . . These good and faithful men were not perfect, or had not a complete notion of God's purpose." Sykes.— "God has provided some better thing for us: the promise to them was the first personal appearance of the Messiah; the better thing provided for us is the promise of Christ's second appearance, that they might *then* be made perfect, but not without *us*, though we have received the accomplishment of the first without *them*." Wolfius. See Doddridge.

SECTION III.

Ch. XII. *THE WRITER, in this chapter, suggests a variety of weighty considerations to dissuade and deter the Hebrew Christians from apostasy. Ch. xii. throughout.*

1. He presses upon their minds the examples of persevering and triumphant faith which he has just celebrated, and he especially directs their attention to that of Jesus, ver. 1—4.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses¹, let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin² which easily entangleth us, and let us run with perseverance the race which is appointed us.*

I have defined the nature and represented the excellence of faith in the divine promises, by referring you to those eminent examples of the triumphs of faith which are recorded in the Hebrew scriptures. Here we read of many who suffered persecution, and torments, and death, rather than renounce their principles and abandon their hopes. What is the natural inference from this representation? Surely, that it is incumbent upon us to breathe the same honourable, inflexible, persevering spirit, by which our ancestors were so nobly distinguished. Since then we are encompassed with so great a multitude of confessors and martyrs to the great principle of confidence in God, let us be ambitious to enroll ourselves in the glorious fraternity. We are like candidates in the public games to run for a prize, and the race will require our utmost exertion: let us then throw aside every weight which would retard our course, and the very garments which, by entangling our steps, would impede our exertion, and let us press forward till we reach the goal. In other words, let us lay aside all prejudice against the gospel, and all that reluctance which we who have indulged expectations so widely dif-

¹ *Cloud of witnesses.*] Not witnesses to our exertions, but witnesses to the truth; a multitude of confessors and martyrs by whose example we ought to be animated. See Grotius, Whitby, &c. "so thick a company of men who acted by the principle of faith, and endured so many afflictions." Sykes.

² *The sin:*] i. e. apostasy, which easily entangles (*εὐπερίστανον*), which like a long garment folds about the legs of the racer and obstructs his speed, or throws him down. See Hallett and Newcome. "Not any one sin, but every sin which is apt to get round us and entangle us, and thus to hinder us in our course." Sykes. See 1 Cor. ix. 24, 26.

ferent from the truth are so prone to feel against the mission and character of Jesus, and which is so constant and powerful a temptation to apostasy; and having upon just grounds embraced the truth, let us resolutely persevere in our adherence to it, and approve ourselves the worthy heirs of the faith of our ancestors.

Ch. XII.
Ver. 1.

Looking upon Jesus, the leader and the finisher of this faith³, who, with a view to the joy which was set before him, endured the cross, despising the ignominy, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

2.

I have a greater and more interesting example to propose to you than any or all that I have already mentioned. It is that of our master Jesus himself. Look, my Christian friends, to our great leader; trace him from the beginning to the end of his course. He was the first to begin the career of faith, and the first to receive its reward. How did faith exert itself in him, and how was it recompensed? Confiding in the promise of God, that his reward should be proportioned to his labours and his sufferings, he endured crucifixion, he made light of the disgrace, he did not shrink from duty, or from suffering: and proportioned to his faith is his honour and reward. He was raised from the dead, and is exalted to the right hand of God, to power, and glory, and to be the head of his church. Shall we hesitate then to believe and to obey the gospel, when the pain and shame to which we are exposed by it can bear no proportion to what he endured for us?

For consider⁴ him who endured such opposition of sinners to himself, lest ye be wearied⁵, fainting in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood combating against sin⁶.

3.

4.

³ *The leader and finisher :*] i. e. the person who exhibited a perfect example of Christian faith from beginning to end, both in its exertions and its rewards. "Christ was not the Author of Faith, but the Leader on to it. He was the person that goes before and leads us on as captain. And thus is this word used as often as it is applied to our Saviour. Acts iii. 25, v. 31, Heb. ii. 10. The Leader of faith is one who leads the way in faith, encouraging others to follow. And the Finisher must be one that has gone through and brought to perfection faith: one who, by showing what may be accomplished or done by the practice of faith, has done and borne all that can be done in consequence of that principle." Sykes.

⁴ *Consider.*] αναλογισασθε, trace the analogy between his case and yours. "The word signifies, to reason, to argue from, to compare cases." Sykes.

⁵ *Lest ye be wearied.*] "καμνειν est tædio laboris affici: εκλυσθαι, lassari. Hæc duo verba a palæstra, et ab athletic recepta sunt, qui dicuntur καμνειν κ. τ. λ. quum vel animi, vel corporis robore ac viribus destituti, victas dant adversario manus, palmamque concedunt." Rosenmuller. "that ye may not give out." Worsley.

⁶ *Combating against sin.*] "The phrase seems to be borrowed from gladiatorial exhibitions." Newcome. Unto blood, μεχρις αιματος. q. d. ad sanguinis usque profusionem. Pudeat vos defatigari levioribus malis. Illi quorum supra meminimus partim ad capitalia supplicia, partim ad tormenta rapti fuere, Christus ipse mortem, et quidem crucis perpessus est. Vos libertatis tantum et facultatum damna aut pericula incurristis. αμαρτιαν hic intellige defectionem a reli-

Ch. XII.
Ver. 4.

In order to confirm your virtuous and Christian resolution, consider well the analogy between the sufferings of Jesus and your own: the fortitude which he exhibited, and the glory which he acquired. You meet with opposition and persecution from the enemies of the gospel: so did he. His doctrine was discredited, his mission was despised, his character was calumniated, his miracles were ascribed to Beelzebub, his person was insulted, and, finally, he was condemned as a blasphemer, and crucified as a traitor. Yet he bore all with magnanimity; he declined no suffering which was expedient as a testimony to truth, and to accomplish the purposes of his mission. And what have you suffered in comparison with him? You have indeed been insulted, calumniated, robbed, and imprisoned, and you have borne all with a patience and fortitude which has done you the highest credit: but you have not yet, like your great leader, been called forth to sacrifice life in the defence of truth, and in the severe conflict with the persecuting power. Prepare yourselves, my dear brethren, for this last and greatest trial: animated by the example of your honoured master, by the pattern of his sufferings, and by the splendour of his recompense, faint not, halt not, in the career of glory; persevere in your honourable course, and cheerfully submit to bear the cross, that so you may ultimately obtain the crown.

2. The writer reminds the Hebrew Christians that persecutions themselves are proofs of paternal affection, and that they would be ultimately beneficial; consequently that they afford no just ground for apostasy, ver. 5—11.

1.) Correction in a limited degree is what every son may expect from a parent, and the persecutions they endured were proofs that God acknowledged them as his genuine children, ver. 5—8.

5. *And have ye¹ forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth² with you as with sons* (Prov. iii. 11, 12), *My son, think not lightly of the discipline of*
6. *the Lord, nor faint under his reproof; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth³.*

gione Christiand." Rosenmuller. *Sin*, perhaps the persecuting power; and *sinner*s, in the preceding verse, persecutors.

¹ *And have ye.*] Mr. Hallett reads this as an interrogation; and observes, "that it is not likely that the writer here designed to accuse the Hebrews of having forgotten the scriptures."

² *Which reasoneth.*] διαλεγεται. See Macknight. Mr. Wakefield translates the passage, "have ye forgotten that encouraging voice, which talketh with you as with sons?"

³ *And scourgeth.*] The modern Jews and our translation point and understand the original, Prov. iii. 12, as signifying, "even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." The writer of this epistle follows the Greek version, and the original equally admits both. But the parallelism

I have just hinted that persecution is a fierce antagonist, with which it will be needful for you to struggle to the last extremity like your glorious leader, if you are desirous to win the prize. But this potent enemy may be regarded in a less formidable and more conciliatory light. Persecution is a divine discipline, intended to correct, to strengthen, and to improve the mind, and persecutors are a rod in the hand of God, employed by him to fulfill his gracious purposes; nor can they do less, or more, than his paternal wisdom is pleased to appoint. Your own scriptures, my beloved brethren, bear me out in this representation. Do not you recollect the advice and the reasoning of Solomon in the book of Proverbs, ch. iii. 11, 12, where, addressing himself to his reader, as a father to his son, he urges him neither to be insensible to the discipline of affliction, nor yet to sink into despondency under it: and he enforces this advice by the just and affecting consideration, that all affliction, of whatever kind, proceeds from God, and that it is a discipline with which he usually visits those whom he acknowledges as his sons, those who most resemble him, who are most dear to him, for whom he has provided an everlasting inheritance, and whom he is training up, by this painful but needful and salutary exercise, for the possession and fruition of it, when the season of maturity shall arrive.

Bear chastisement⁴ with patience: God is dealing with you⁵ as with sons: for what son is there whom his father chastiseth not? But if ye be without chastisement, of which all others are partakers, certainly ye are spurious⁶, and not legitimate sons. 7.
8.

Let the considerations which the wise prince suggests to his readers reconcile you, my brethren, to a persecuted and suffering state. Look beyond second causes: think not upon the malice and wickedness of your adversaries: trace all to God: it is by his permission they act: it is he that is inflicting

of the sentence is better preserved in the LXX. than in the English translation. The Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldee follow the Greek version. The Latin Vulgate agrees with the English. See Hallett and Sykes.

⁴ *Bear chastisement.*] Mr. Wakefield observes, that "the old versions unanimously disown the conjunction *εἰ*, and this gives beauty and propriety to the passage." The Alexandrine, Clermont, and many other manuscripts read *εἰς*.

⁵ *God is dealing with you.*] *προσφερεται*. "God is offered, or offereth himself, to you as to sons." Sykes. See this use of *προσφερεται* in Grotius, Raphelius, Xenophon, and Wetstein." Bowyer.

⁶ *Spurious.*] "*Hoc sensu verbum sæpe obvium est apud bonos auctores, præcipue Demosthenem. Agit vobiscum tanquam cum liberis, ostendit se vestri habere curam, salutem vestram prospicere, ut solent patres, qui liberos bene educare student.*" Rosenmüller.

⁶ *Spurious.*] "The meaning is, no due care is taken of you, no concern is shown about your welfare." Sykes.

Ch. XII.
Ver. 8.

parental chastisement by their instrumentality. Murmur not at his dispensations. God is acting the part of a wise and affectionate parent. He corrects because he loves, and wills the happiness of his children. If you were not exercised with the discipline of suffering and persecution, as all true believers are, it would be a proof that you were not the children of God, but children of the world; for the world loves and cherishes its own offspring; and if your conduct was such as to escape persecution in times like these, it would be a proof that you are not what you profess to be, true believers in Christ; but wicked hypocrites, who make a profession of Christianity only so far as it suits your own convenience, and to answer some sinister end.

2.) The obligation they were under to acquiesce and submit to the divine discipline was beyond comparison greater than that under which they had lain to earthly parents, ver. 9—11.

9. *Have we then¹ had natural fathers² who chastised us, and whom we revered? and shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits³, and live⁴?*

Has the discipline with which we have been exercised by wise and virtuous parents in the days of childhood produced that filial awe and reverence in our minds which has induced us upon all occasions, without hesitation or reluctance, to obey their orders? and is it not much more reasonable to resign ourselves entirely to the will and direction of our heavenly Father, to whom we owe existence and all its blessings? obedience to whom will ensure everlasting life, while disobedience will be attended with consequences far more terrible than the punishment of death, inflicted by the law of Moses on the rebellious son.

¹ *Have we then.*] Wakefield, Newcome, and others, read this as a question. Mr. Wakefield observes, that the same elegant construction is found in other good writers. See Bowyer.

² *Natural fathers.*] So Wakefield. *πατέρας της σαρκος*, *fathers of our flesh*.

³ *Father of spirits.*] *τῷ πατρὶ τῶν πνευμάτων*, "our spiritual father." Wakefield.—"patri spirituum: cui nos omnes corpus et animam debemus, ut Num. xvi. 22. *vel potius*, patri spirituali, patri qui est spiritus perfectissimus, qui nunquam pro lubitu, sine idoneis rationibus castigat, vel errores in castigando admittit, ut patres humani solent. Nam describitur Deus ut parens, non ut creator." Rosenmuller.

⁴ *And live.*] Dr. Doddridge observes that the writer here alludes to the law, Deut. xxi. 18, &c. which inflicts capital punishment on the disobedient child; and he mentions this as an instance of the writer's forcible way of suggesting the most weighty thought, sometimes in an oblique manner and in very few words. He ascribes the epistle to Paul, and observes that many such passages are to be found in that apostle's writings.

For they indeed corrected us for a short time⁵ as they thought fit⁶, but He for our advantage⁷, that we might be partakers of his holiness⁸. Ch. XII. Ver. 10.

Earthly parents, in the discipline which they administered, generally intended well, and correction had its use: but the motives even of the best of parents are not always pure, nor their judgement infallible. Caprice, passion, partiality, nay, even cruelty, occasionally dictate paternal chastisement: and sometimes, with the best intentions, they are mistaken, both with regard to the cause, the nature, the measure, and the effect of the correction which they apply. But the father of spirits is infinitely remote from all infirmity of this kind. He has no motive but kindness; he has no measure but wisdom; he never errs as to the cause, the time, the degree, the nature, or the duration of the discipline with which he visits his frail and suffering children: he intends their good, and he effects it; nor will he desist till he accomplishes his purpose; till he has moulded them to that filial temper and spirit to which it is his will to form them; to a resemblance to himself in holiness and purity. Nor are those sufferings, which are brought upon us by the envy and malice of persecutors themselves, to be regarded in any other light than as visitations from God. For the rage and malice of angry and violent men are as entirely under the direction and controul of divine providence as a disease or a tempest.

Now no correction for the present is a subject of joy⁹, but of sorrow: nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those that are exercised¹⁰ by it. 11.

⁵ *For a short time.*] προς ολιγας ημερας, *for a few days.* Dr. Doddridge observes, but perhaps it is too great a refinement, "that this is to be applied both to our earthly parents and to our heavenly Father; and it contains a beautiful and comfortable intimation that this whole life, when compared with our future being, is but as a few days: indeed infinitely less than the days of childhood to those of the longest life of man upon earth."

⁶ *As they thought fit.*] κατα το δοκον αυτοις, "as it seemed fit to them. Perhaps not always rightly." Newcome. "after their own humour." Wakefield.

⁷ *For our advantage.*] επι το συμφερον. "for our profit." Newcome. "for our good." Wakefield.

⁸ *Partakers of his holiness.*] "might become holy as he is holy." Newcome.

⁹ *No correction is, &c.*] δοκει ειναι, *seemeth to be*: but δοκει is here an expletive. See Hallett and Newcome.

¹⁰ *Exercised.*] γεγυμνασμενοις, "to those who are trained by it." Macknight; who remarks, that "there is an allusion to those who were trained to the combat by the exercises of the palæstra." Dr. Doddridge supposes that "the peaceful fruit of righteousness contains an allusion to the crown of olive given to the victor in the Olympic games, which was an emblem of peace." He mentions, that "Bos translates the word ειρηνικον, *pleasant, joyful*; and that Wolfius supposes an allusion to the peace of God, which we obtain by faith."

"Though at first all chastening is matter of sorrow, and not of joy, yet afterwards it produces quiet of mind, and such inward peace in the progress in virtue and goodness as abundantly compensates the grief at first felt." Sykes.

Ch. XII.
Ver. 11.

I do not mean, by any thing which I have said, to divest you of the feelings of human nature, or to advise you to act as if you were insensible to suffering. All suffering is painful; and the sufferings which you have endured, as well as those to which you will in all probability be called out, are of the most exquisite kind; they are such as you cannot but feel most severely: but let them not alienate your heart from God, nor tempt you to apostatize from your Christian profession: for be assured, that whatever you endure in the cause of truth shall hereafter find an abundant compensation; and persevering fortitude shall be crowned with distinguished honour and everlasting peace.

3. The writer urges the believing Hebrews to remove whatever might impede the progress of others, and to discountenance those whose evil example, like that of Esau, might have a pernicious influence, ver. 12—17.

1.) He exhorts the Hebrew believers, from the considerations which he had offered, to encourage themselves to a vigorous prosecution of their Christian course, ver. 12—14.

12. *Therefore set right¹ the hands which hang down, and the enfeebled knees;*
 13. *and make smooth paths² for your feet, that the limb which halts may not*
 14. *be put out of joint³, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all men, and that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord⁴.*

Thus you see that affliction and persecution are no proof of a bad cause, nor any reason why you should desert your profession. On the contrary, they rather afford a presumption that you, and the cause for which you suffer,

¹ Set right.] ἀνορθώσατε. “Quapropter remissas manus et genua languescientia erigite.” Rosenmuller. “bring to their right position.” Macknight. “Ανορθώω, surrigo, sursum vel rursus erigo—metaphoricè, reficio, in pristinum meliorem statum reddo.” Schleusner. The words are taken from Isa. xxxv. 3, LXX. with a little variation. The prophet calls upon the weak and feeble to rouse and exert themselves. As Rosenmuller observes, it cannot be supposed that the prophet alludes to the Grecian games, but rather to those who were faint and weary with a long journey. The Hebrews had been harassed with persecution, and were in danger of apostasy.

² Smooth paths.] “τροχίας ὀρθας τροχία, semita, via. Sensus igitur, Facite complanari vobis vias per quas ituri estis.” Rosenmuller. Hallett says the word is used in the same sense Prov. iv. 11, 12, xi. 5, xii. 15.

³ Put out of joint.] See Macknight. “ἵνα μὴ τὸ χῶλον ἐκτραπῇ. Ne membrum debile luxetur, sed sanetur potius. τὸ χῶλον hic est membrum corporis ubi nervi aliquid de vigore suo perdidere.” Rosenmuller. “Talia membra, si iter fiat per loca inæqualia, facile loco suo excidunt, sive luxantur, quod hic est ἐκτρεπεσθαι.” Grotius, Rosenmuller.

⁴ See the Lord.] See Matt. v. 8, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, Rev. xxii. 4. In this expression some have supposed a beautiful allusion to the cloud of glory in the most holy place, into which none but the high-priest was permitted to enter. But in the new Jerusalem all shall be admitted to the beatific vision; all will be high-priests, clothed in holiness as in a pontifical robe.

are under the special care and providence of God. Do not then, my brethren, give way to discouragement and despondency. Having advanced so far, persevere to the end: rouse your spirits, summon up your resolution, renew your vigour and your activity in your Christian career. You have indeed a rugged path before you, and the limbs of some of you begin to fail: but be not disheartened; do not stop, do not look back; level the ruggedness of the way; I have furnished you with materials; press forward, therefore, avoiding every occasion of stumbling, every act which would wound your integrity and disable you from proceeding. Live in peace: do not unnecessarily give offence, nor provoke persecution; and be not unwilling to associate in Christian communion with those who may not see the necessity of submitting to the yoke of the law. Above all things practise holiness; not legal holiness merely; but put on that robe of universal virtue, which, like the golden garments of Aaron, will qualify you for admission into the most holy place, and will secure your acceptance with God.

Ch. XII.
Ver. 14.

2.) He exhorts them to mark and to discountenance those whose evil example, like that of Esau, would have a pernicious influence upon others, ver. 15—17.

Carefully observing lest any one fall short of the gift of God⁵, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you⁶, and by it many be polluted.

15.

Be watchful over one another. Often look attentively around, and see if there be any one of your number who is wavering in his profession, and ready to decline from the faith, either through fear of persecution, or disgust at the doctrine of the gospel; and observe particularly whether there be any who, not satisfied with their own defection, are endeavouring to sow the seeds of discontent and disaffection among their brethren, so that others are in danger of being seduced by them from their allegiance to the truth; and if such dangerous members are to be found in your community, mark them well, and first endeavour to reclaim them, and, if possible, to bring them

⁵ *The gift of God.*] της χάριτος, *grace, favour*: the dispensation of the gospel, so called as the gratuitous gift of God. Titus ii. 11, 2 Cor. vi. 1. “*falling short of*, ὑστερων απο, is nowhere else used in the New Testament. It often occurs without a preposition, and signifies, *to be wanting, or deficient in*. Rom. iii. 23, 1 Cor. i. 7, John ii. 3. Here it means *failing to attain*, through sloth or carelessness.” Sykes.

⁶ *Trouble you.*] ενοχλη. This is the reading of all the copies and versions. But the words are a citation, or nearly such, from Deut. xxix. 18, LXX., where the reading is εν χολη, which is preferred by Grotius, Mill, and Wakefield, who translates the words, “*lest any root of bitterness, as gall, spring up.*”

Ch. XII.
Ver. 15.

back to the faith : but, if they are irrecoverable, disown them altogether ; hold no fellowship with them ; but root up and cast away the poisonous weed, that it may not diffuse its baleful influence and destroy the crop.

16. *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, like Esau¹, who, for*
17. *one repast, gave away his birthright. For ye know, that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected ; for he found no way to change his father's mind², though he sought it earnestly, even with tears.*

Observe further, whether there be any persons among you who are attached to the licentious indulgences of heathenism, who set little value upon the privileges and the promises of the gospel, and who are willing to sacrifice all their professions and all their hopes to the gratification of their appetites, and to their secular interests, as Esau sacrificed the privileges of his primogeniture for one miserable meal, plainly proving that he valued them not. Wretched indeed is the case of these thoughtless and wicked apostates. Esau, the surrender of whose birthright had been extorted from him by the

¹ *Fornicator, or profane person, like Esau.*] This account of Esau's selling his birthright is related Gen. xxv. 29 : that of his unavailing regret at being cheated out of his father's blessing, Gen. xxvii. 30—40. Esau is called a fornicator ; probably because he married into a heathen family, Gen. xxvi. 34 ; and perhaps he might tolerate, if not practise, idolatrous worship. Idolatry is often called *fornication* in the scriptures, not only because it allowed lewdness, and in some cases even required prostitution, but more especially because the connexion between God and his chosen people being represented as a marriage covenant, idolatry was a violation of that covenant. An idolater, therefore, is called a fornicator, and the idolatrous church a harlot. See Taylor's *Key to the Romans*, ch. ii. sect. 11. Esau is also called *profane*, because he despised and sold his *birthright*. The birthright that he sold was no doubt the entail of the promise, which he must have known to have been made upon the family of Isaac, and which probably he did not know to have been settled before his birth upon the posterity of his younger brother. He was criminal, therefore, in parting with a privilege to which he thought he had a claim. Perhaps he expected, that by the blessing of Isaac he might recover his lost birthright ; but out of this he was again tricked by the base artifices of Rebekah and Jacob ; nor could he by all his tears and passionate exclamations prevail upon his father to revoke the grant. But though the conduct of Esau was reprehensible, it is no excuse for the meanness, fraud, and falsehood of Rebekah and Jacob. And it ought to be remembered, that the descent of the promise did not in the least degree depend upon the success of these tricks and impositions of the younger brother, but had been fixed by Providence, independently on the merits of either, previous to their birth : Gen. xxv. 23, Rom. ix. 12. This state of things is in perfect unison with the general dispensations of divine providence, by which external advantages are continually dispensed promiscuously without any regard to character.

"To be *profane* is to treat with contempt any thing that God appoints, knowing it to be his appointment ; or, if God himself be treated not with that reverence and respect which is due to his majesty, this is properly profaneness." Sykes.

² *To change his father's mind.*] μετανοίας. See Wakefield, Newcome. "μετανοια does not signify here repentance, but change of sentiment." Owen ap. Bowyer. Vide chap. vi. 1, where the same word occurs in the same sense. Repentance from dead works : i. e. change of mind from the works of the law, called *dead works* because they leave those who rely upon them under sentence of death : ceasing to depend upon them for justification.

cravings of hunger, and by the ungenerous conduct of Jacob, and who had been cheated out of his father's blessing by the joint artifice of his mother and his brother imposing upon the credulity of a weak old man, was soon and deeply sensible of his loss. This, however, he could not repair, for all his tears and bitter exclamations could not prevail upon Isaac to recall the blessing. So, likewise, those wicked apostates who, in contradiction to their better judgements, sacrifice their Christian birthright, their principles and their hopes, to the gratification of their passions, and to views of self-interest, will another day, when it is too late, have their eyes opened to see and bitterly to lament their folly. In the mean time, it is your duty to exclude such persons from Christian communion, that others may not be corrupted by their pernicious example.

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Ver. 17.

4. The writer presses this duty of steadfastness, from the consideration of the different spirit of the law and gospel, one being a dispensation of terror, the other of mercy, ver. 18—24.

1.) He represents the awful pomp with which the law was delivered at Mount Sinai, but which did not accompany the new dispensation, ver. 18—21.

Moreover³, ye are not come to the mountain which was the object of touch⁴, and which burned with fire, nor to the thick cloud, and darkness, and tempest, nor to the blast of the trumpet, and the sound of words, the hearers of which entreated⁵ that the discourse might not be addressed to them any more, for they could not endure that strict command, If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned⁶; and so terrible was the appearance, that Moses said⁷, I exceedingly fear and tremble.

18.

19.

20.

21.

The mild and gentle spirit of the new dispensation, and the glorious pri-

³ *Moreover.*] γὰρ. "This is not an inference from what immediately precedes, but an additional reason for perseverance: connected with ver. 15." Sykes.

⁴ *Object of touch.*] ψηλαφωμενῳ, a hebraism for ψηλαφῆτω. Grotius. Not that *might be touched*, for the people were forbidden to approach it, but which was the *object of touch*; tangible, solid, in opposition to Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem; which was spiritual, and not perceptible by the senses. Mr. Wakefield gives the sentence a different turn; viz. "a mountain spread all over and burning with fire." "an earthly material mountain." Newcome.

⁵ *Entreated.*] See Exod. xix. 16—19, xx. 1, 18, 19.

⁶ *It shall be stoned.*] Exod. xix. 12, 13. The words added in the received text, "or thrust through with a dart," are wanting in most of the ancient manuscripts and versions. "They were probably a marginal insertion." Owen, Bowyer.

⁷ *Moses said.*] This declaration of Moses does not appear in the history: hence some have inferred that the epistle to the Hebrews was not written by a Jew, but there might be a tradition to this effect; and the circumstance itself is highly probable.

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vileges which it confers, form an additional and very powerful motive for a faithful adherence to it, which must operate very strongly upon every candid and ingenuous mind. There is nothing in the promulgation of the doctrine of Christ to alarm your fears, like the awful scenes which took place at the promulgation of the law. You are not conducted through a dreary and perilous wilderness to a lofty mountain, the object of sight and sense, burning with fire, enveloped in smoke, darkened with clouds, and involved in tempests. You hear no alarming blast of a trumpet, no supernatural voice, articulating sounds such as struck terror into the Jewish hosts, and induced the dismayed people unanimously and earnestly to request that Moses would be their mediator with God, to communicate the divine commands, that they might not again be terrified with those tremendous thunders. For they were struck with horror at all they saw and heard; and trembled at the rigour of the prohibition which had been issued to prevent their passing the appointed limits, which extended to beasts as well as to men: and Moses himself was no doubt exceedingly alarmed, though the history does not expressly mention it, and we must needs suppose that he dare not have ascended the mountain and ventured into the thick darkness *where God was*, if he had not been specially encouraged and fortified for the occasion. All this alarming apparatus was extremely well suited to the introduction of a dispensation of terror. But it is our happiness to have been admitted into a more mild and liberal dispensation, a dispensation of mercy and peace, which addresses itself, not to our senses and passions, but to our reason, not to our fears, but to our love and gratitude, and which required not to be published with such terrific pomp.

2.) The writer contrasts the mild spirit of the gospel with the severity of the law, under the figure of an introduction to the privileges and society of a free and a happy community, and to the solemnities of a spiritual temple in heaven, ver. 22—24.

22. *But ye are come*¹ *to Mount Sion*², *even to the city of the living God*³,

¹ *But ye are come.*] The design of the writer is to contrast the mild and gentle spirit of the gospel with the terrors of the law, and from this consideration to deduce an argument for steadfastness in the faith: and he effects his purpose by an ingenious allegory.

In the course of his epistle he has represented the visionary tabernacle which was exhibited to Moses in the Mount, for a model of the grand Mosaic tabernacle, as having a real existence in the heavenly Sion, and being beyond all comparison superior to that of which it was the model. In the sanctuary of this tabernacle God resides, upon his mercy-seat, and here Jesus

to the heavenly Jerusalem⁴, and to myriads of messengers of God⁵, to the general assembly⁶, and congregation of the first-born, enrolled in heaven⁷,

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officiates as the high-priest, propitiating with his own blood. Now, as the law at its first promulgation introduced the affrighted Israelites to the terrors of Sinai, so the gospel introduces believers to all the glories and privileges of this heavenly Jerusalem.

Keeping this imagery in view, the whole of the author's discourse in the three following verses is not only consistent and intelligible, but highly beautiful, and apposite. In a figurative style he describes the privileges of the gospel state. Whereas, upon any other supposition, if the author is interpreted literally, whether what he advances is applied to the state of things on earth, or in heaven, or partly to one and partly to the other, the whole appears unintelligible, inconsistent, and irrelevant. Of the commentators which I have consulted, Dr. Sykes appears to have approached the nearest to the true meaning of the writer.

² *To Mount Sion.*] Hallett justly observes that Sion was the old city where David dwelt. Solomon's temple was built upon Mount Moriah, 2 Chron. iii. 1. Hence Mount Sion never signifies the place of the old Jewish temple. Afterwards David and the other prophets speak of Mount Sion as the place where the gospel would be first published to all nations, and whither people of all nations, whether Jews or Gentiles, would assemble and worship together, Isa. ii. 3. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 6. "Ye have joined yourselves to a dispensation which has nothing terrible or difficult." Sykes.

³ *The city of the living God.*] The gospel state, represented under the figure of a community consecrated to God, and under his direction. *The living God*: though the patriarchs, and those to whom the promises were originally made, died in faith, only seeing them afar off, God is living still, and will ever live, to fulfill all his promises. The city of God is the city where God resides, on the mercy-seat of that celestial sanctuary which was exhibited to Moses.

⁴ *The heavenly Jerusalem.*] The city of Jerusalem was typical of the Christian church. The upper or heavenly Jerusalem is opposed to the Jerusalem that *now is*; i. e. to the state of things under the law, Gal. iv. 25, 26. And therefore the heavenly Jerusalem does not here signify heaven, or the place where all good men shall dwell after the resurrection, but the state of things under the gospel, or the community of believers. In the present allegory, it is the city where that heavenly tabernacle is fixed which Moses saw in the mountain.

⁵ *To myriads of messengers of God.*] μυριασιν αγγελων, *myriads*, that is, tens of thousands, or a very large number of angels. But as the term αγγελος is ambiguous, and is used in the first chapter to express former prophets and messengers of God, there is no difficulty in taking it in a similar sense here; and of understanding the writer as alluding to the far greater number of prophets and teachers under the gospel than under the law, and especially to the great number of missionaries which were employed at the first promulgation of the gospel. These are called *angels* or *messengers* 2 Cor. viii. 23, Rev. i. 20.

⁶ *To the general assembly.*] πανηγυρει. Dr. Doddridge observes from Albert, *Observ. Philolog.* p. 441, that "this word properly signifies a stated convention upon some joyful festival occasion, and is particularly applied to the concourse at the Olympic games: "in which view," adds Dr. Doddridge, "it expresses a very lively and elegant opposition to the case of the Israelites, who were struck with a general terror when they were convened before Mount Sinai." This is no doubt the writer's meaning here: *q. d.* in this city of our solemnities the gospel introduces us to the celebration of a joyful universal festival, in which our hearts, instead of shrinking with terror, may justly expand with delight. It is plain that he is speaking of a state of things now existing, not of what will happen after the resurrection. "πανηγυρις sæpe est conventus populi Israelitici ad Deum laudandum." Rosenmüller.

⁷ *Congregation of the first-born enrolled in heaven.*] εκκλησια πρωτοτοκων. "εκκλ. church, signifies all who are called out of the world, and entitled to an eternal inheritance in heaven." Sykes. "The right and privilege of the first-born was, that they were all God's property, and sanctified to him. Exod. xiii. 2, Numb. iii. 13, viii. 17. The Levites were taken instead of them. Now by Christ we are all called to be the first-born: i. e. to be hallowed, and to be God's peculiar." Sykes.

Enrolled in heaven, απογεγραμμενων. The allusion here is to a book that contained the names of the first-born. Numb. iii. 40. *in heaven*: in the heavenly Jerusalem, as citizens enti-

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*and to God the judge of all*¹, *and to just men made perfect*², *and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*³, *and to a blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better than that of Abel*⁴.

I have been describing to you the terrors of the law, of Mount Sinai, of its darkness, its thunders, its lightnings and its earthquake: and of that

tled to all the rights and privileges of the holy city, in whose records they are now registered. The same scenery is still supported.

¹ *To God the judge of all.*] “Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, were the only persons that were admitted to see the God of Israel. Exod. xxiv. 9, 10: the rest of the people were not permitted. But now every man is called upon to come to God, to see him as he is.” Sykes. The *costume*, if one may so express it, is still kept up. Every believer is admitted into the holy of holies, to see the divine glory on the mercy-seat. To see God is to form those just and encouraging views of the divine attributes and character which the gospel exhibits.

Macknight justly remarks, that “God is fitly styled the Judge of all, or universal monarch, agreeably to the phraseology of the Hebrews, who called those persons *judges*, who exercised sovereign rule in Israel.” “to God the judge and justifier of all believers, Jews and Gentiles.” Hallett; who well observes, that “the word *all* was not carelessly inserted here.”

² *And to just men made perfect.*] πνεύμασι δικαίων τετελειωμένων “the spirits of just men made perfect.” The *spirit* of a man is a man himself, 1 Cor. ii. 11; the spirit of God is God himself, *ibid.* The spirit of Timothy is Timothy himself, 2 Tim. iv. 22. See also 2 Cor. ii. 13, Rom. viii. 16, Philem. ver. 25: the *spirits of just men*, therefore, are *just men themselves*. Concerning these this writer teaches, that whereas the law could make nothing perfect, ch. x. 1, Christ hath by his one offering for ever perfected those who are sanctified.” Heb. x. 14. To the assembly of just men thus made perfect does the gospel introduce those who believe; and who are themselves, therefore, justified and made perfect by the blood of Christ, that is, perfectly released from the condemning sentence, and from the tyrannical authority of the law which is abolished by the death of Christ.

By this interpretation the author appears to be intelligible and consistent. But if by the “spirits of just men made perfect,” we understand separate souls in an intermediate state, the observation is not only irrelevant, but it is not true. For in what sense can believers in Christ be said to be now introduced into the society of separate spirits in heaven? or what privilege have they in this respect above good men under the law? “By this,” says Dr. Priestley, “is not to be understood the state of good men in a future world, for to this they were not arrived; but to that greater perfection of character, and the superior privileges which the gospel enables them to attain.”

³ *Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.*] The writer has shown at large that Jesus, as mediator of the new covenant, after having suffered death as the victim by which the covenant is ratified, has since entered into the celestial tabernacle to officiate as high-priest in the holy of holies; where it is the privilege of believers to be introduced to him through the gospel. See ch. viii. 6, ix. 15—21.

The same scenery is still sustained: the meaning of which is, that by the gospel we become acquainted with the character, the mission, the doctrine, and the offices of Christ.

⁴ *A blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better than that of Abel.*] Griesbach reads κρείττον for κρείττονα, and το for τον, *better for better things, and that of Abel for than Abel.*

The believer, introduced to Jesus in the sanctuary, is sprinkled by him with his own blood, ch. ix. 13, 19, 20; which speaketh better than that of Abel. The blood of Abel, spilt by his wicked brother, cried for justice out of the ground, Gen. iv. 10; that of Christ, wantonly and maliciously shed by his wicked countrymen and brethren, also has a voice, but it is the voice of pardon, of kind intercession: “Father, forgive them! they know not what they do.” And this blood, sprinkled on the believer, reconciles him to God; he no longer appears as an offender against the law. It reconciles believers of all descriptions to each other; for the death of Christ breaks down the wall which separates the court of the Gentiles from that of the Jews, and unites them in one holy and harmonious society.

tremendous voice of God, which our ancestors dared not continue to hear. I will now illustrate the gentle spirit of the gospel, the mildness of its introduction, and the excellence of its privileges.

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Under the guidance of the gospel you have been led to *Mount Sion*, that holy mountain, the mountain of the Lord, from which the oracles of God have long since announced that his law should go forth, that there all nations should assemble to worship, Isa. ii. 2, 3.

You have been brought to the *city of the living God*, to that holy and happy place which was the subject of the divine promise to your pious ancestors, who never were put into possession, but died in faith: to a city consecrated to the God who, while generation after generation passes away, ever lives to fulfill his promises to the minutest iota; to that *heavenly Jerusalem*, where the true tabernacle is fixed, and that heavenly sanctuary is opened, in which our great high-priest officiates, of whom you have heard so much. And here you have been introduced to a large and unknown number of faithful servants and messengers of God, sent forth and qualified by him to instruct and reform the world. In former ages their number was small, and the word of God was scarce, when there were few settled teachers in Israel, and only now and then, at different times and in different ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But now, under the gospel dispensation, the Lord gives the word and great is the company of preachers, so that all may learn, and all be edified. You are here introduced to a vast assembly, an host that none can number, who are gathered together to celebrate and to enjoy the gospel feast. You are here joined to the universal church, collected from all nations and from all quarters of the world: you are become members of a community all of whom are heirs of promise, all of whom are entitled to the privileges of the first-born, all of whom are registered as citizens of heaven, how little soever they may be known or noticed upon earth, and all have an equal share in the privileges, the liberties, and the promises of the gospel. You are introduced into a community of which God is the sovereign, under whose just and beneficent reign all his faithful subjects are free and happy: and though he once acknowledged himself in a peculiar sense the God of Israel, he now assumes the character of the universal sovereign, the supreme judge of all the earth, the God of all; the powerful protector and the bountiful rewarder of all individuals, of all nations, who submit to his government, and who bow to the sceptre of his mercy. You are introduced into that holy and happy society who, by the efficacy of the

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gospel sacrifice, are made for ever free from the jurisdiction and from the condemning sentence of the law. Finally, my brethren, you are introduced to Jesus, the apostle and high-priest of our profession; to him who was the messenger of peace and good-will to men; to him who has sprinkled us over with his own blood, which consecrates us for ever to God, with that blood which, far from calling out of the ground for vengeance, like that of Abel, speaks peace to all, even to enemies, persecutors, and murderers, and, by putting an end to the legal dispensation, abolishes the enmity which hath subsisted among the different divisions of mankind, and united all into one great family, in which, as Moses once acted the part of a faithful servant, so Christ now sustains the character of the elder brother and first-born son, while God himself owns the endearing relation of the kind and impartial parent and benefactor of all.

Surely then, my brethren, you will enjoy your new and happy state with gratitude, will diligently fulfill your duties as children of God, as citizens of the new and heavenly Jerusalem, and will faithfully adhere to the engagements into which you have entered.

5. The writer concludes this section with insisting upon the abolition of the Mosaic institute and the permanence of the Christian dispensation, the superior excellence of which would not fail to entail the severest punishment upon those who, from corrupt motives, rejected it, ver. 25—29.

1.) The dispensation of the gospel requires a more serious attention than the law, considering the different circumstances in which they were promulgated, ver. 25.

25. *Beware that ye refuse not¹ him who is speaking² to you. For if they*

¹ *Refuse not.*] παραιτησῃθε. The same verb which occurs ver. 19: *q. d.* “do not deprecate God’s speaking to you as the Israelites did of old.” See Peirce. The scenery is still kept up in the author’s mind of the delivery of the law to the Israelites from Mount Sinai, and of the gospel to the believers in Christ from Mount Zion.

² *Him who is speaking to you.*] τον λαλῶντα. “*i. e.* God, who spake (ὁ λαλῶν) to our fathers by the prophets, and who in these latter days hath spoken (ελάλησε) to us by his son,” ch. i. 1. That God is the person referred to is evident, as Peirce observes, because “the person speaking is he whose voice at Mount Sinai shook the earth, and who had promised by the prophet Haggai, “yet once more, I shake not the earth, but also the heaven.” This could not be Christ, because the same person is called by the prophet the Lord of Hosts, and promises that the desire of all nations shall come.” *to you.* ὑμῖν is the reading of the Clermont manuscript, and of the Syriac version. See Lindsey’s *Sequel*, p. 356. Sykes and many others understand *him who speaketh* of Jesus Christ. By *him who spake on earth* they understand either Moses, or the angel of the covenant by whom the law was given; and by *him who speaketh from heaven* they understand the Son of God who came down from heaven, and whose voice then shook the earth. “This,” says Archbishop Newcome, “favours the supposition that our

escaped not who refused him when speaking³ upon earth, much less shall we escape if we reject him now he is speaking from heaven⁴. Ch. XII. Ver. 25.

God once descended upon Mount Sinai, and there in awful and terrific pomp he delivered the law to the hosts of Israel. In milder glory he now makes known his will from Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. The doctrine of salvation is now publishing, not in a strain of terror and alarm, but of peace and good-will; and the most engaging motives are proposed to excite men to the love and practice of virtue. But, if disobedience to the law, a system of terror, and a yoke of bondage, was punished with just severity, and no offender escaped its condemning sentence, how can we hope to escape a severer condemnation, if we contemptuously reject the gospel of Christ, a doctrine of truth and grace, which is recommended to us by the most powerful motives and the most irresistible evidence? We cannot plead, as our forefathers did, that human nature cannot support the terrors of the voice of God. If we deprecate and refuse to hear the messenger who addresses us in these mild and gentle accents, it is because we hate the message itself, and are determined to disobey. O my brethren! above all things beware that you do not, by an obstinate rejection of the gospel invitation, expose yourselves to inevitable ruin.

2.) To enforce the argument, there has been a solemn declaration of the

Lord was the angel of the covenant who presided at giving the law." At any rate it could not be Moses whose voice shook the earth; and Whitby, Peirce, and others, have proved that it could not be Christ: for he who shook the earth was the same Being who declares by Haggai that "he will shake not only the earth but the heavens." Now this Being is called repeatedly "the Lord of Hosts," and foretells that the Desire of all nations shall come. But the Lord of Hosts is a title appropriated to God the Father; and the Son is never represented as foretelling his own advent. He who speaketh, therefore, can be no other than God the Father, (even upon the Arian hypothesis,) who delivered the law by Moses from Mount Sinai, and the gospel through Jesus Christ from Mount Sion, as before explained.

³ *When speaking.*] χρηματίζοντα. "who uttered oracles." Newcome. Peirce contends that this word and its conjugates universally signify in the Old and New Testaments, divine oracles and admonitions. This may be doubted: see Rom. vii. 3. But here no question can arise upon this subject, for the speaker is God himself.

⁴ *Speaking upon earth—from heaven.*] At the giving out of the law God spake from earth, from the tabernacle upon Mount Sinai he communed with Moses. He is now speaking from Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the most holy place whither our high-priest is ascended, and where he receives the oracles, the gospel doctrine which he reveals to us. The scenery is still kept up; and by attention to it the whole passage becomes easy and intelligible.—Peirce and Macknight understand the expression, "speaking from heaven," as speaking by the holy spirit sent down from heaven, 1 Pet. i. 12. This is a very rational interpretation; but it is not wanted, and does not suit the connexion. God spake through Moses from the earthly tabernacle on Mount Sinai: he now speaks to us, through Jesus, from the heavenly sanctuary on Mount Sion.

CH. XII. abolition of the Mosaic, and of the perpetuity of the Christian covenant, ver. 26, 27.

Ver. 26. *Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath expressly promised,*

27. *Yet once more¹ I am about to shake², not the earth only, but the heaven also³. Now this expression, yet once more, signifieth the changing of those things that are shaken⁴, as of things that had been appointed for a season⁵, that the things not shaken may continue.*

¹ *Yet once more.*] This prophecy, here cited from the LXX., is found in Haggai ii. 6, 7. It is thus translated by Archbishop Newcome in his *Minor Prophets*. The oracle is addressed to Zerubbabel, and the people with him who were disheartened when they saw the great inferiority of the second temple to that of Solomon, to encourage them to proceed: "Thus saith Jehovah, God of Hosts, Yet once more in a short time, I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all the nations. And the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah God of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith Jehovah God of hosts. Greater shall be the glory of this latter house than of the former, saith Jehovah God of hosts. And in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah God of hosts."

The Archbishop, with most Christian writers, interprets this prophecy of the advent of the Messiah after, or previously to, certain revolutions, political or religious, which are here foretold. His presence, as the Desire of all nations, would exalt the glory of the second temple above that of the first. But Dr. Heberden, in an ingenious communication to the learned Primate, subjoined in the notes, advances plausible reasons to prove that nothing more is intended than that "the splendour and riches of this new building should in time be very great;" and judiciously cautions the friends of revelation "against urging weak arguments in its support, which often give birth to the most plausible objections against it:" "And can there," says he, "be a weaker argument than that which sets out with doing violence to the original text in order to form a prophecy, and then contradicts the express testimony of the best historian of those times, in order to show that it has been accomplished?" The writer of the epistle plainly cites the prophecy as foretelling the dissolution of the Mosaic œconomy to make room for the unchangeable dispensation of the Messiah.

² *I am about to shake.*] *σεισω* is the reading of some of the best copies and of the LXX., and is approved by Griesbach, ed. 2.

³ *Not the earth only, but the heaven also.*] Mr. Peirce strangely supposes that "shaking the heaven" refers to some revolution in the celestial hierarchy. Dr. Sykes much more judiciously remarks, "that in prophetic language the heavens are put for the higher powers, for those who enjoy great dignities and honours, and the earth is put for the lower people; and therefore shaking the heavens and earth signifies commotions, distractions, and the overthrowing of men and kingdoms. When the temple was built, God declared by his prophet his intention, once, in no very long time to cause great commotions in Judea, and among all its inhabitants, and not only among them, but in all the known world; and then should the desire of all nations come. Accordingly, the Messiah came. But before he came, we find the world overturned by Alexander and his captains. And when all these kingdoms were subdued by the Romans, it was justly said that all nations were shaken."

To me it seems most probable, that by *the heavens* the writer here means the Mosaic dispensation. Dr. Priestley however says, "It is almost certain that this prophecy relates to those great convulsions of states and kingdoms which are to precede the setting up of the proper kingdom of Christ."

⁴ *The changing of those things that are shaken.*] "*σαλευομένων*, shaken," says Dr. Macknight, "is a metaphor taken from ships which are tossed backwards and forwards by the winds and waves, till they are sunk or beaten to pieces." See also Doddridge on the place.

⁵ *Appointed for a season.*] Mr. Peirce observes, that *ποιεῖν* signifies *to appoint*, Heb. iii. 12, Mark iii. 14, and in many other places; and that the word *πεποινημένων* being a participle of the preterperfect tense, ought to be rendered accordingly as of things which had been appointed; i. e. *only for a time*, at the end of which they were to undergo a change. Macknight under-

When God descended to deliver the law upon Mount Sinai, the whole Mount quaked exceedingly, Exod. xix. 18, and all nature seemed to tremble in his awful presence: but since that memorable event, and in reference to the age of the Messiah, he has declared by the prophet Haggai (ii. 6), at the time of the building of the second temple, "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations," &c. Observe here, that the emphatical phrase, *this once*, expresses that this concussion is to take place once only, and no more; and therefore, that whatever be the object intended, it is to be shaken down and demolished like a ship that is tossed and broken to pieces by the waves. And you are to understand, that in prophetic language heaven and earth do not signify natural objects, but civil and moral states of things: and particularly concerning those who are and those who are not in covenant with God, Jews and Gentiles: and the fact predicted is, that the Mosaic economy, as well as the heathen idolatry, is to give way to the Christian religion, which is the last dispensation of God to man, and is intended to spread through all nations, and to endure to the end of time.

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3.) The writer concludes this section with urging the believing Hebrews to adhere firmly to the gospel, and solemnly warning them of the danger of neglecting it, ver. 28, 29.

Wherefore, since we receive a kingdom⁶ which cannot be shaken, let us firmly retain the gift⁷, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and pious fear: for even⁸ our God is a consuming fire.

28.

29.

stands the expression as an ellipsis for things *made with hands*, i. e. inferior and imperfect; and applies it both to the heathen and to the Jewish ritual. Mr. Wakefield, after Bos *Exercit.* p. 259, reads *πεπονημένων*, worn to decay. See Wetstein and Bowyer *in loc.* This is an excellent reading, but unsupported by authority. See Griesbach.

⁶ *Receive a kingdom.*] βασιλειαν παραλαμβάνοντες. An allusion to Dan. vii. 18: "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever; even for ever and ever." Peirce observes, that in classic authors the phrase is only used concerning such as became kings, and is to be explained by such texts as Rev. i. 6, v. 10, 1 Pet. ii. 9; where Christians are spoken of as kings. "We do not receive a kingdom," says Dr. Sykes, "over which we are to reign as kings, but we are admitted into a kingdom over which Christ is king, and we subjects entitled to the advantages of it."

⁷ *Let us retain the gift.*] εχωμεν χαριν. Whitby observes, "that εχειν is often put for κατεχειν, to retain or hold fast, 1 Tim. i. 19; and χαρις throughout the New Testament signifies the favour and grace of God tendered to us in the gospel, 2 Cor. vi. 1; so that the import of the words is, Let us continue stedfast in that faith and dispensation delivered in the gospel, as being that alone which renders our persons and services acceptable to God." So Peirce: "let us be stedfast in embracing and adhering to the gospel." Dr. Harwood: "let us inviolably adhere to the gospel." Archbishop Newcome: "let us hold fast favour, the gospel with all its gratuitous benefits." "Εχωμεν χαριν sometimes signifies 'let us be thankful.' So

Ch. XII.
Ver. 29.

It is our happiness, my Christian friends, to live under the new and perpetual dispensation of the gospel, by the faithful profession of which we are made kings and priests unto God, in a kingdom that shall never come to an end: we are advanced to dignities and privileges of which, if it be not our own fault, we shall never be deprived: and all this is the free unmerited gift of God to us. Let us then prize our privileges, and hold them fast; let us adhere firmly to the gospel, which will instruct us how to serve and worship God in the most acceptable manner, and to maintain upon our minds that habitual reverence of him which will induce us to live in the practice of universal virtue.

And let us remember, that if we reject the gospel, we reject it at our peril. The Israelites were warned by their great lawgiver not to forget the covenant of the Lord their God, and to relapse into idolatry, for that the Lord their God was a consuming fire and a jealous God, Deut. iv. 23, 24. And let us not flatter ourselves that, under the milder dispensation of the gospel, we can apostatize and sin with impunity. Our God is indeed a God of love; but he is also a God of immutable and impartial justice: and they who slight and obstinately reject his mercy shall inevitably feel the weight of his indignation.

S E C T I O N IV.

THE EPISTLE concludes with practical exhortations, with salutations, and a suitable benediction. Ch. xiii.

1. The writer exhorts to brotherly love, to hospitality, to sympathy, and to chastity, ver. 1—4.

Ch. XIII.
Ver. 1.

*Let brotherly kindness continue*¹.

So Luke xvii. 7, 2 Tim. i. 3, Philem. ver. 7." Sykes. "let us have thankfulness." Wakefield. "The sense of adherence to the gospel," as Peirce observes, best "agrees with the great design of this epistle, and what he is perpetually inculcating, that they should be stedfast in their profession of the gospel."

⁸ For even.] καὶ γὰρ. So Wakefield and Macknight. The allusion is to Deut. iv. 24, where Moses reminds the Israelites of the death of Korah and his party: *q. d.* "Good as he has shown himself in sending his son and admitting us to his everlasting kingdom, yet like severe to those who violate his laws." Sykes.

¹ Brotherly kindness.] Doddridge observes, that there was "a peculiar propriety in addressing this exhortation to the Hebrew Christians, who were ready to entertain an ill opinion of their Gentile brethren."

I have heard with great satisfaction of the benevolent affection which you bear to each other, and of your mutual readiness to perform kind offices. This is the genuine spirit of the gospel. Let this fraternal affection be extended to all who bear the Christian name, whether of our own or of other nations. Let this generous spirit flourish in full vigour in your hearts, and suffer it to produce its genuine effects.

Ch. XIII.
Ver. 1.

Be not forgetful of hospitality²; for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

2.

Be, like your pious ancestors, kind and hospitable to strangers: as far as it may be in your power shelter them in your houses, supply their wants, and protect them from injuries. Of such generous treatment Abraham and Lot have given excellent examples; and their munificence received an ample reward. Their history records that the kind offices which were intended for men, were unknowingly, performed to angels; and that one of these patriarchs was remunerated by the promise of an heir, and the other by the protection of the lives of himself and his family in a scene of general destruction. Live then in the practice of hospitality: nor shall your kindness to strangers remain without its suitable and seasonable reward; and though you cannot now hope to receive visits from angels, you may nevertheless, perhaps, be sometimes requited far beyond your expectation, even by those who have been the objects of your liberality.

Remember those that are in bonds, as if bound with them; and those that suffer cruel treatment, as being yourselves also in the body.

3.

You have yourselves been sufferers for truth, and therefore you know the heart of a sufferer: cultivate then a spirit of sympathy. Many of your fellow Christians are now in chains for the gospel; and some, have even undergone the most cruel tortures. You are liable to the same sufferings. Think what, in those circumstances, you would desire and expect from your brethren: and now, by your friendly visits, by your salutary advice, by your tender attentions, and by your fervent prayers, administer those consolations, of which, in similar circumstances, you yourselves would stand in need.

² *Hospitality.*] The entertainment of strangers was a virtue of great importance in an age and country in which houses for the accommodation of travellers were not in use. When the writer alludes to the examples of Abraham and Lot, Gen. xviii. xix., who were honoured with a visit of angels, he could not mean to insinuate that similar visits might be expected under the new dispensation, but merely that such a conduct was acceptable to God, and would meet with a proper reward; or perhaps, that the guests so protected and entertained, might possibly in some shape or other make ample compensation for the kindness received.

Ch. XIII.
Ver. 4.

Let marriage¹ be honourable among you all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

Let not the rigid and unwarrantable notions of certain sects among you lead you to think lightly of marriage, or persuade you that a single state is either preferable in itself, or peculiarly acceptable to God. Let virtuous wedlock be held in the highest honour, and let the sacred engagement be maintained inviolable: for know that the heavy judgements of God will fall, not upon an institution which he has himself ordained and blest, but upon those who violate the marriage covenant, or who seduce innocence from the path of virtue.

2. He recommends content, and confidence in Divine Providence, ver. 5, 6.

5. *Let your conduct be free from covetousness. Be content with your condition: for God himself hath said², I will never leave thee, I will never*
6. *utterly forsake thee³. So that we may say with courage, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me.*

The love of money, when carried to excess, is disgraceful and mischievous: it is peculiarly so in the professors of the gospel; and especially under circumstances of persecution, or in imminent danger of it. Be not, therefore, infected with this base passion, so as to be induced by it to do any thing unworthy of your character, with a view either to increase or to retain riches. What you can acquire by industry, consistently with honour and integrity, that enjoy, improve, and be content with. And you have reason to be so; for the promise made by God to Joshua (ch. i. 5), that he would never desert him while he continued faithful to his duty, is in a very important sense applicable to all the virtuous, in all ages. And while, conscious of integrity, we rely upon this promise, we may with the Psalmist (Ps. cxviii. 6) triumph

¹ *Let marriage.*] Hallett and others have observed that this verse, standing among exhortations, ought to be translated as such. There is probably an allusion in it to the austere sect of the Essenes, who discountenanced marriage. The Alexandrine and Clermont read γαρ, *for*, instead of δε, *but*. See Griesbach.

² *God himself hath said.*] The promise is made to Joshua Deut. xxxi. 8, Josh. i. 5; but the writer assumes it as applicable to all good men: as Hallett says, he “justly argues from the unchangeable perfections of God, that he will do like things in like cases. Since therefore God, when he employed Joshua, promised that he would not leave him, any Christian whom God at any time employs in any work, may for the same reason depend upon it that God will never leave nor forsake him.”

³ *I will never utterly forsake thee.*] ε μη σε ανω, εδ' ε, μη σε εγκαταλιπω, “I will not, I will not leave thee; I will never, never, never forsake thee.” Dr. Doddridge, who notices the emphasis of the original. See also Macknight. “Est hic in posteriore membro triplex negatio, quæ apud Græcos vehementer negat. Similis sententia Esa. xli. 13.” Grotius.

in God as our portion, and our protector, and may justly rise above the fear of our enemies, and the dread of distressing want, as long as we persevere in the line of duty. Ch. XIII.
Ver. 6.

3. They are exhorted to recollect and to follow the good examples of their eminent departed teachers, ver. 7.

Remember those who presided over you⁴, who spake to you the word of God; whose faith imitate, considering the issue of their course of life⁵. 7.

You, believing Hebrews, have been eminently distinguished by the rank and character of your instructors. Jesus himself laboured and suffered among you, and all his apostles have commenced, and some of them have terminated their labours in your service. The first martyr among the apostles suffered at Jerusalem, Acts xii. 1; and in that devoted city, another who long presided over your assemblies, while the rest of the apostles were commissioned to carry the gospel into distant countries, and who conducted himself with unexampled prudence, and meekness, and zeal, has lately undergone a violent death. Remember such with veneration and affection. Call to mind their pure and salutary doctrine, their unwavering faith, their honourable profession, their undaunted courage, their active zeal, their Christian charity, their suffering fortitude, and, above all, their glorious and triumphant death, in which, so far from renouncing their principles and their profession, they esteemed it an honour to be accounted worthy of suffering in so good a cause. Animated by their example, adhere stedfastly to the same profession, and you shall assuredly in due time be admitted to the same reward.

⁴ *Remember those, &c.*] The writer here perhaps principally refers to the apostle James, called the Less, a brother or very near relation of our Lord; who, having resided chiefly at Jerusalem, is regarded as the first bishop of that church, and is described as a man of exemplary piety, prudence and goodness. He suffered martyrdom at Jerusalem, probably a short time before this epistle was written. "Bishop Lloyd, in his funeral sermon for Bishop Wilkins, thinks that this may refer to James the apostle, and to James, commonly called the first bishop of Jerusalem; both of whom had been put to death there before this epistle was written." Doddridge. "Here," says Dr. Sykes, "St. Paul speaks of those who had ruled over them; whose behaviour and whose personal care of them they were to keep up in their minds. They were men who had spoken the word of God to them, and were now no more." Dr. Lardner reports, that "the apostle James suffered martyrdom in a tumult at Jerusalem A.D. 62." Lardner's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 502.

⁵ *The issue of their course of life.*] την εξεασην της αναστροφης. See Wakefield. "Follow their faithfulness: consider the final consequence of their conversation and behaviour among you." Sykes.

Ch. XIII. 4. The writer urges a stedfast adherence to the simplicity of the gospel doctrine, ver. 8, 9.

Ver. 8, 9. *Jesus Christ*¹ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever: be not carried aside² by a variety of foreign doctrines³; for it is better that the heart should be established in grace⁴ than in meats⁵, in which they who have walked⁶ have not been benefited by them.

I cannot, my brethren, conclude this epistle without entering an earnest caution against your being misled by those early inveterate prejudices in which you were educated, and by which the pure spiritual religion of our great master is so much in danger of being corrupted. The doctrine of Christ is simple, uniform, and unalterable. What it was in the beginning, that it now is, and such it will continue to be, to the end of time. Adhere, therefore, with unshaken firmness, to those important principles which you have learned from the eminent teachers to whom I have just alluded; and be not deluded into the admission of a mass of notions and practices which are quite foreign to the spirit of the Christian religion, and which are taught by men who have no authority for it. You have many severe trials in prospect; and let me assure you, that you will find that vigour which you will derive from a firm adherence to the genuine principles of that merciful dispensation which has been revealed by Christ, of far greater benefit than any support which you can draw from the strictest observation of Pharisaic ceremonies,

¹ *Jesus Christ.*] "The evangelical doctrine, as delivered by Christ and his apostles." Newcome. That this is the true meaning of the author is evident from the inference which he draws from it: Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. *Christ* frequently signifies the doctrine of Christ. See Acts v. 42, 1 Cor. i. 24, 2 Cor. iv. 5. The writer could not here intend to assert the immutability of the person of Christ, for that would not have been true. "By Jesus Christ," says Dr. Priestley, "in this place, as in some others, is meant not the person of Christ, but his gospel, which the apostle says is the same, and does not vary with the opinions of men; alluding to the novel doctrines of the Gnostics in the next verse."

² *Carried aside.*] παραφερεσθε, *carried aside*, not περιφερεσθε, *carried about*, is the true reading. See Griesbach. "This verse is connected with the foregoing: *q. d.* Be not *therefore*," &c. Newcome.

³ *A variety of foreign doctrines.*] Gr. "by various and foreign;" *i. e.* by insisting upon Jewish ceremonies as necessary to salvation." See Newcome, and Hallett.

⁴ *In grace.*] χαριτι. Newcome explains it, "by complying with the rules of the gracious gospel covenant." That *grace* signifies the gospel, see ch. xii. 28, and the note there; also John i. 17, Rom. vi. 14, Gal. iv. 4. *the heart be established:* *i. e.* that your courage be established. See Macknight. "To be established in grace is to be so convinced of the truth of the gospel, as to persevere steadily in the profession of it." Sykes.

⁵ *Meats:*] *i. e.* "distinctions about their kind. Col. ii. 21, Heb. ix. 10." Newcome. *q. d.* it is better to fortify the mind by adhering to the moral precepts of the gospel, than by practising the ceremonies of the law.

⁶ *They who have walked.*] "The meaning of *walking* is, frequent or constant use of, the spending life in such things. They who constantly used or observed such kind of ordinances, cannot by them make themselves acceptable to God." Sykes.

which, as they have no moral value in themselves, so they have never been found to be of much practical use to the strictest observers of them, either as a security from suffering, or as a support in the season of calamity. Ch. XIII.
Ver 9.

5. In figurative language, borrowed from the Jewish ritual, he represents the superior privileges of the Christian church, ver. 10—12.

We have an altar, of which they have no right to eat⁷ who perform divine service at the tabernacle. For the bodies of those animals⁸, whose blood being offered for sin, is brought by the high-priest into the most holy place, are burned⁹ without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify¹⁰ the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 10.
11.
12.

⁷ *We have an altar, of which they have no right to eat.*] “To eat of the altar is the same thing as to be admitted to terms of friendship with God. If the question be asked, What is that altar which Christians have? I answer, Not the cross on which Christ suffered; for that can in no good sense be deemed an altar. Nor is it the Lord's table, nor any such thing: it is a figurative way of expressing the thing or manner by which we are made friends with God. It is to be understood from the nature and design of sacrifices. We have the true means of engaging in friendship with God, and of being reconciled to him by Christ, and having our sins passed over, just as the altar was the means of reconciliation and forgiveness under the law. But the Jews, continuing in obedience to the law, cannot have the advantages that we have.” Sykes.

⁸ *The bodies of those animals, &c.*] See Lev. xvi. 27. ‘The bullock for the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp, and they shall burn in the fire.’ “He assigns the reason why those who serve the tabernacle could not eat of the Christian altar. For they had no right to eat of any sacrifice but such as was expressly allowed them to eat of, and in consequence they could not eat of the sacrifice on the great day of expiation, which was all to be burned without the camp: now, as to eat of the sacrifice was the sign of being in actual friendship with God, to eat of the Christian sacrifice was to be in friendship with God upon the terms laid down by Christ. And as it is impossible to partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons, so, in like manner and for the same reason, it is not possible to eat of the sacrifices offered to God in the temple according to the law, and to partake of the Christian altar.” Sykes.

The plain meaning of the writer is, that those who persist in relying upon the works of the law for acceptance with God, exclude themselves from the privileges and hopes of the gospel. They cannot be at once both Jews and Christians: this he expresses in sacrificial terms, well understood by the Hebrews to whom he wrote, though not always equally intelligible to modern readers.

⁹ *Is brought—are burned.*] These expressions are thought to indicate that the epistle was written while the Jewish temple was yet standing, and divine worship was carried on in it.

¹⁰ *Sanctify,*] *ἁγιάσῃ*, the people with his own blood. “If it be inquired,” says Dr. Sykes, “how Christ sanctified the people with his own blood, it was by his blood that the covenant of God was ratified, and the world sanctified through the truth. Such as came into the belief of him as the Christ, were separated from the world to the service of God. They were made a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.” “There is no reason to doubt,” says Mr. Hallett, “but that the author had here a particular regard to the believing Gentiles, who were to become the people of God as well as the Jews.”

Ch. XIII.
Ver. 12.

The priests and Levites, who are employed in the service of the temple, esteem it a great privilege to be fed from the altar, and regard it as a pledge of communion with Jehovah, as a token of his favour, and as a symbol of devotedness to his service. I have shown at large, that we who believe in Christ are priests in a nobler temple, and are carrying on a nobler service, and are consecrated with the blood of a nobler victim. We also feast upon the sacrifice as a token of our communion and acceptance with God. And in this particular likewise we excel the ministers of the Mosaic tabernacle. They are restrained from feasting on the piacular sacrifice: the victim which is offered on the day of atonement, the blood of which is sprinkled in the most holy place to atone for the sins of ignorance, is carried to the outside of the camp, and totally consumed by fire as the law appoints. But we who serve in the celestial temple are permitted to feast upon our glorious victim, by whose blood, offered once for all, we are sanctified; to eat that flesh which is meat indeed, and to taste of that blood which is drink indeed: and thus to express our fellowship and communion with God, and our devotedness to him.

By which figurative language you will easily see that what I mean to say is this, that while our unhappy countrymen obstinately persist in their adherence to the Mosaic ritual, seeking to please God by ceremonial observances, and wilfully rejecting the offers of the gospel, they never can attain that peace with God, and those blessings and privileges which the gospel of Jesus offers to all who believe in and obey him.

Christ, as I have before stated, is the sacred victim, by the shedding of whose blood the new covenant is ratified and confirmed, and by the sprinkling of which all who believe are consecrated to God; and, in correspondence with other piacular victims, he suffered without the gate, becoming thus a curse for us.

In other words, he was exposed to the ignominy of crucifixion, and was treated as an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, that all, of all nations, who believe and obey the gospel may be admitted into the holy community of which Christ is the head.

6. Upon this ground he urges the believing Hebrews to be ready to forsake all their former prejudices and connexions, and to follow Christ, ver. 13, 14.

Let us therefore go forth¹ unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach². For here we have not a continuing city³, but are seeking earnestly one to come.

Ch. XIII.
Ver. 13.
14.

Jesus our master suffered on Mount Calvary: he was disowned by his countrymen as a blasphemer, he was delivered over to the Romans to be executed as a traitor, and was put to an ignominious and accursed death without the walls of the city, as a miserable and abandoned outcast. But let us not desert him in his unmerited disgrace, nor let us be ashamed or afraid of professing ourselves his followers. For his sake, who hath done and suffered all this for us, let us willingly forsake all, let us give up our possessions, our friends, our country, our most deeply rooted and dearly cherished prejudices, and, if it be the will of God, even life itself, in order to secure the blessings of his gospel. Expelled from the communion of our deluded brethren, let us willingly go forth, bearing that cross, which our lord and master is so bitterly reproached for having borne; and let us cheerfully suffer with him, that so we may be glorified together. And be these sufferings what they may, their duration is momentary, and will soon be over: for in this state our residence will be but short. Here we have no resting-place, no quiet peaceable permanent home: banished from the earthly, we are securing to ourselves a habitation in the heavenly Jerusalem, where we hope to enjoy a tranquil, a holy, and an immortal life.

7. As priests of the new dispensation, he exhorts them to present the acceptable sacrifices of thanksgiving and benevolence, ver. 15, 16.

Through him, therefore⁴, let us offer up the sacrifice of praise unto God 15.

¹ *Go forth:] i. e.* let us willingly quit our dependence upon, and our connexion with, the ritual and ceremonial dispensation; or let us contentedly bear to be cast out of communion by our ignorant and misguided brethren. See Hallett. "In imitation of him, let us not hesitate to suffer as he did, however reproachful as well as painful such sufferings may be." Priestley.

² *His reproach:] i. e.* bearing that which he was reproached for bearing and for having suffered upon, that is, the cross; which, however, the writer does not expressly mention, that he may not offend the feelings of his readers. See Newcome.

³ *Not a continuing city.]* Some think there is an allusion here to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem: an event which happened about eight years after this epistle is supposed to have been written. "We that believe in Christ are but strangers here, travelling to the heavenly Jerusalem." Sykes.

⁴ *Through him, therefore.]* Archbishop Newcome connects ver. 15, 16, with ver. 12, including ver. 13, 14, in a parenthesis. *through him, δι' αὐτοῦ* that is, as we have been instructed by him; not in any mystical dependence upon a supposed atonement and intercession.

Ch. XIII. *continually*¹, *that is, the fruit of our lips*² *which render thanks*³ *to his name.*

Ver. 16. *But to do good and to distribute forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

Being admitted to feast upon the rich provisions of a spiritual altar, it is our duty, as priests of this new profession, to offer the sacrifices which our great lawgiver hath enjoined: and these are not either animal victims or the fruits of the earth. The sacrifices of the Christian temple are gratitude to God and benevolence to man. Let us then, as instructed by Jesus, offer to God the daily sacrifice of a warm and a grateful spirit: and to the forms of devotion let us uniformly join the practice of benevolence; contributing, to the utmost of our ability, to the relief and happiness of all around us. These are sacrifices which, if they are presented with a pure heart, will be far more acceptable to God than the fragrance of the daily burnt-offering.

8. The writer recommends becoming respect and deference to their spiritual guides, ver. 17.

17. *Obeys those who preside over*⁴ *you, and submit*⁵ *to them, for they watch for you*⁶ *as those who must render an account; that they may perform this their office with joy*⁷, *and not with mourning, for that would be unprofitable*⁸ *for you.*

¹ *Continually.*] Probably an allusion to the daily burnt-offering.

² *The fruit of our lips.*] A citation from Hos. xiv. 2, from the LXX. In the Hebrew, "the calves of our lips."

³ *Which render thanks.*] ὁμολογαντων "this may either signify giving thanks to God, or, confessing his name, that is, Christ's; owning ourselves to be his disciples." Sykes, who gives the preference to the latter sense.

⁴ *Who preside, &c.*] These were probably persons of wisdom and experience, who had been chosen to superintend the concerns of the Hebrew church, and to instruct and exhort the people after the death of the apostle James. It is evident from the character which this writer gives of them, and from the respect which he requires to be paid to them, and which indeed he himself shows them, ver. 24, that they were persons of great probity and worth, and well qualified for their office.

⁵ *Submit:*] *i. e.* to all their just precepts and admonitions. He could not mean to represent these teachers and guides as possessing unlimited authority over the faith and practice of the Hebrew Christians. This was more than the apostles themselves claimed. 2 Cor. i. 24.—The Pharisees were rigidly exact in external services, but very lax in their morals and in the government of the mind: perhaps some of the Hebrew Christians might think their pastors too severe in requiring a stricter subjection of the affections and thoughts to the rule of duty than the Pharisees did, and to this the writer may possibly allude. See Matt. v. 20, xvi. 6, and Hallett's note upon the text.

⁶ *Watch for you.*] In the original, "for your souls:" a hebraism. "In behalf of your souls is equivalent to, in your behalf." Newcome.

⁷ *With joy:*] *i. e.* perform their office, not give up their account; for the negligence and

Though the Hebrew church can no longer boast of being under the personal superintendence of apostles, and of being instructed by men who were the immediate ambassadors of Jesus, yet they still enjoy the privilege of being directed and taught by wise and faithful men, the successors of those eminent instructors. Let then such persons be treated with the respect and reverence which they deserve. Obey the precepts which they deliver, which, though more pure and strict than those which your most ostentatious sects inculcate, extending even to the affections and the thoughts, are nevertheless positively enjoined by the Christian law, and essential to your acceptance with God. Yield, therefore, to their friendly admonitions; for you know the character of the men. They act not from the love of power, but from a sense of duty. They are accountable to God for the fidelity with which they discharge their trust; and therefore they exercise a vigilant inspection over you, and sometimes, perhaps, impose restraints which you may think burdensome. But place confidence in their superior wisdom, and submit cheerfully to their salutary admonitions: this will refresh and animate their spirits, and they will discharge their laborious and hazardous office with delight. But if you are refractory, their hearts will be discouraged, and their spirits will be oppressed with sorrow. This, however, will be more upon your account than their own. Their faithful labours will be accepted and approved; but wretched will be the lot of those upon whom such labours have been lost, and against whom it will be their painful duty to bear their final testimony.

Ch. XIII.
Ver. 17.

undutifulness of the hearers could not abate the joy of the faithful minister, whose fidelity and zeal are a fragrant odour to God in them that perish, equally as in those that believe. See Doddridge. So Wakefield: "that they may preside over you with joy."

Nevertheless, Archbishop Newcome and many others interpret the author differently: *q. d.* that they may give up their account with joy, and not with grief. For as in accommodation to our present conceptions the apostle speaks of meeting his converts with joy at the day of Christ; so it is impossible, according to our present mode of thinking and feeling, that a faithful minister should not feel deep regret, if any of those over whom he has watched, and for whom he has laboured, should be missing on that day, and if it should then be his painful duty to bear his testimony against them. See Newcome and Macknight.

⁸ *Unprofitable for you:*] "*i. e.* dangerous." Newcome. Mr. Hallett, after a judicious explanation of the nature and limitations of the advice here given, adds, "From hence we may form this general rule, suited to all ages, viz.—that where pastors in all respects behave themselves as Christians, and so are meet for Christian communion; where they are qualified with sufficient gifts, and faithfully perform the duties of the pastoral office; where they do not lord it over God's heritage, but are examples of all virtue to the flock, and heartily labour to promote the salvation of their people, under a lively apprehension that they must hereafter give up a strict account of their management to the great shepherd, who will either reward or

Ch. XIII. 9. He requests an interest in their prayers, ver. 18, 19.

Ver. 18. *Pray for us; for we are confident¹ that we have a good conscience, determined in all things to behave well: and I the more earnestly intreat you to do this, that I may be shortly restored to you.*

Before I conclude, I request an interest in your prayers, that, like your faithful and vigilant instructors, I also may be diligent in the duties of my office, and may meet with comfort and success in it. You may perhaps be in some measure prepossessed against me, for what you may imagine to be a deficiency of zeal for the institutions of the law: but I assure you that these prejudices are without foundation. I have examined myself thoroughly upon the subject; and I am conscious that it is my earnest endeavour and steady resolution to act upon every occasion in conformity to the strictest fidelity and integrity: and that I have never advanced any thing which I was not well convinced that I was fully authorized to teach and to inculcate. Pray then for my success in the Gentile churches: and I am the more earnest in this request, because it is my intention, when I have finished the object of my ministry here, to make a visit to Judea, and I am anxious to be with you as soon as possible.

10. He solemnly commends the Hebrew Christians to the blessing of God, for the improvement of their character, ver. 20, 21.

20. *Now may the God of peace², who restored from the dead the shepherd of the sheep, great by the blood³ of the everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus,*

punish them accordingly, as they promote or hinder the salvation of those souls for which he died: where pastors, I say, act in this manner, the people are bound to obey them; that is, to hearken to their good advice, to submit to their just reproofs, as to men who, like their parents, have a right to exhort and reprove them. And no one can think it any manner of evil, or hardship, to submit to pastors of such a character, in attending to their good and friendly admonitions, and in doing the things which are necessary to their own eternal salvation."

¹ *Confident.*] *πεποιθασμεν.* "For though ye may dislike my doctrine, set forth in this letter, I am certain, in teaching it, I have maintained a good conscience." Macknight. It is evident that the Hebrews to whom the epistle was written knew the writer, though we do not, and, as Hallett observes, "his design in not setting his name could not be to conceal himself from them." He was now at liberty, and desired them to pray for his success, that he might the sooner finish his mission among the Gentiles, and be at leisure to make them a visit. See Hallett and Newcome.

² *The God of peace:] i. e.* "the God that maketh and giveth peace." Hallett; who observes that, "in styling God the God of Peace he seems to have had a view particularly to the peace which God made between the Jewish and Gentile believers, and his reconciling them both to himself through Jesus Christ." Eph. ii. 14—17.

³ *Great by the blood, &c.]* Moses, Aaron, Joshua, &c. were inferior shepherds: the cove-

make you complete in every good work, that ye may perform his will; working in you that which is acceptable in his sight through Jesus Christ⁴: to him⁵ be glory for ever⁶. Amen.

Ch. XIII.
Ver. 21.

And now, my brethren, to draw to a close, may the God of love and peace, who sent his son into the world upon a message of grace, to reconcile sinners to himself, and all the tribes of mankind to each other, by breaking down the wall of separation,—may He who has borne his public testimony to the mission of Jesus our revered master, by raising him from the dead, after he had dearly purchased the honourable title of the great shepherd of the sheep, the prince and leader of the new dispensation, by voluntary submission to an ignominious death, in order to ratify that covenant of peace of which he was the honoured messenger, and to consecrate that holy and merciful dispensation which supersedes all that preceded it, and is to be superseded by none, but is to endure with all its privileges and blessings to the end of time,—may this God of truth, and peace, and love, dispose and enable you to subdue every prejudice, to adhere firmly to the doctrine of the gospel, and to secure the divine favour and approbation, by living in the constant practice of universal virtue, as you have been instructed by Jesus Christ!—And now, to the supreme and only God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the author of peace and reconciliation, the lover of concord, let all of

nant which they ratified with the blood of animal victims was a mutable and transitory engagement; but that which Jesus ratified with his own blood was a universal and everlasting covenant, ch. viii. 13. He, therefore, is the great shepherd who superintends the whole flock to the end of time. “The meaning is, that Christ became the great shepherd of the sheep, by means of his voluntary offering of himself as a sacrifice for them, and by giving his blood to confirm the new covenant. It was by the shedding of his blood that he purchased for himself the authority of a shepherd, a governor, or leader, to all believers.” Hallett. See Newcome and Wakefield. “That Shepherd of the sheep, great by the blood of the everlasting covenant.” Sykes. *Our Lord Jesus*: some copies add *Christ*. See Griesbach.

⁴ *Working in you through Jesus Christ*:] i. e. May the principles of the gospel, which is the gift of God, produce these happy moral effects. “God in his good providence so ordering and disposing things, that you may do what is well-pleasing in his sight. See Eph. iii. 16, 17, Phil. ii. 13, Col. i. 11.” Sykes. *ποιοῦν ἐν ὑμῖν*, “doing what is pleasing in his own sight, through Jesus Christ.” Wakefield.

Sykes adds, “They had the opportunity, through the gospel of Christ, to work out their own salvation: and the wish is, that God would so direct and govern things as to let them always have opportunity of doing what was acceptable in his sight.”

⁵ *To him be glory*.] The expression is grammatically ambiguous. Christ is the nearest antecedent: but doxologies to Christ are not usual. To the Hebrews they would be peculiarly offensive. Mr. Hallett justly observes, that God is the principal person mentioned, and to him probably the doxology belongs.

⁶ *For ever*.] *τῆς αἰῶνας*. This is the reading of the Clermont manuscript, and of some others. The common reading is *τῆς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων*, *for ever and ever*.

Ch. XIII. all nations, and of all parties, who are saved and reconciled by him, harmoni-
Ver. 21. ously unite in ascribing blessing, and honour, and everlasting praise. Amen.

11. The epistle concludes with a promise of an early visit, in company with Timothy, and with a brief salutation and blessing, ver. 22—25.

22. *Now I intreat you, brethren, suffer this word of exhortation, for indeed I have written a letter to you in few words*¹.

Before I conclude, I must earnestly request that you will take in good part the freedom of my exhortations and admonitions, which I can assure you were dictated by a sense of duty, and a real concern for your improvement and happiness. I could have added much more, but I was unwilling to trouble you with too long an epistle at once.

23. *Know that our brother Timothy is set at liberty*², *with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.*

Timothy, my beloved associate, who has been for a short time in confinement for his profession of Christianity, is now at large. This intelligence will, I know, be grateful to you all. He proposes to join me soon, in which case we shall travel together to Judea; but if he does not come speedily, such is my eager desire to see you that I shall not wait for him.

24. *Salute all those who preside over you, and all the saints*³. *They of*
25. *Italy salute you. Grace*⁴ *be with you all. Amen.*⁵

¹ *I have written a letter to you in few words.*] *δια βραχέων επεσειλα.* “contracting my epistle as much as I could, not enlarging as I might.” Newcome; and so Hallett and Sykes. “I have given you but few commands.” Wakefield, limiting the clause to the preceptive part of the epistle. “*Larga se dabat materia, sed ego, quo minus gravis vobis essem, quæ multis dici poterunt, in pauca contraxi.*” Rosenmuller. It cannot be doubted that the writer might have enlarged indefinitely, as long as he pleased, in the same style.

² *Our brother Timothy is set at liberty.*] Le Clerc thinks that Timothy was not a prisoner during the life of Paul, otherwise the apostle would not have failed to have mentioned it in his second epistle: and Lardner allows that *απολευμενος* may signify *sent abroad on an errand*. Macknight adopts this suggestion, see Matth. xiv. 15, and supposes Timothy to have been sent into Macedonia agreeably to the apostle’s expressed intention, Phil. ii. 19—24, whence he was expected shortly to return. Macknight cites Euthalius among the ancients, and Mill and Lardner among the moderns, as taking the word in that sense. But Dr. Lardner, vol. vi. p. 370, says, “it is not improbable that Timothy might be imprisoned and soon set at liberty again, as divers of Paul’s fellow-labourers were:” and he obviates Le Clerc’s objection, by the supposition that the Second Epistle to Timothy was written early in the apostle’s first imprisonment.

It is remarked by Sykes that Paul often mentions Timothy, sometimes as a brother, Col. i. 1, 2 Cor. i. 1, 1 Thess. iii. 2, at other times as a fellow-labourer; that his name occurs in every epistle except to the Galatians and Titus, and that Timothy is not noticed by any other apostle; which he thinks a presumption that Paul was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

³ *Saints:*] holy by profession, Christians in general.

⁴ *Grace:*] *i. e.* the gospel in its purity and power, the free gift of God to a sinful world.

In the mean time greet affectionately and respectfully, in my name, those reverend persons who, with so much credit to themselves and advantage to you, preside over your spiritual concerns, and present my kind salutations to all the members of the Hebrew church. The believers in Italy, who know of my writing, likewise send their fraternal salutations. And now, my brethren, the best wish that I can form for you, and with the cordial expression of which I take my leave of you for the present, is this: May the doctrine of the gospel, the choicest gift of God to man, be diffused among you, and abide with you, in its truth, in its purity, and in its power! Amen.

CH. XIII.
Ver. 25.

* The postscripts are various, and of no authority: in the most ancient copies they are wanting. They date the epistle from Italy, from Athens, from Rome, from Italy by Timothy, which is contradictory to ver. 23; and one copy adds, that it was written in Hebrew. See Griesbach.

THE END.

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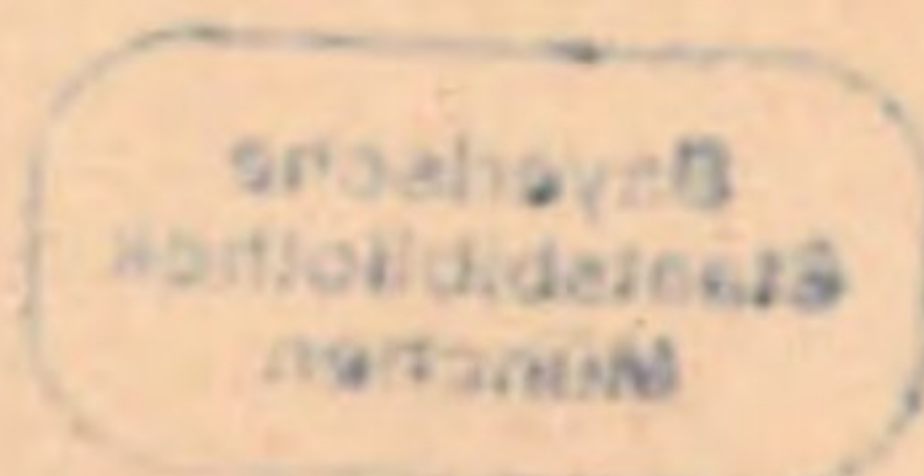
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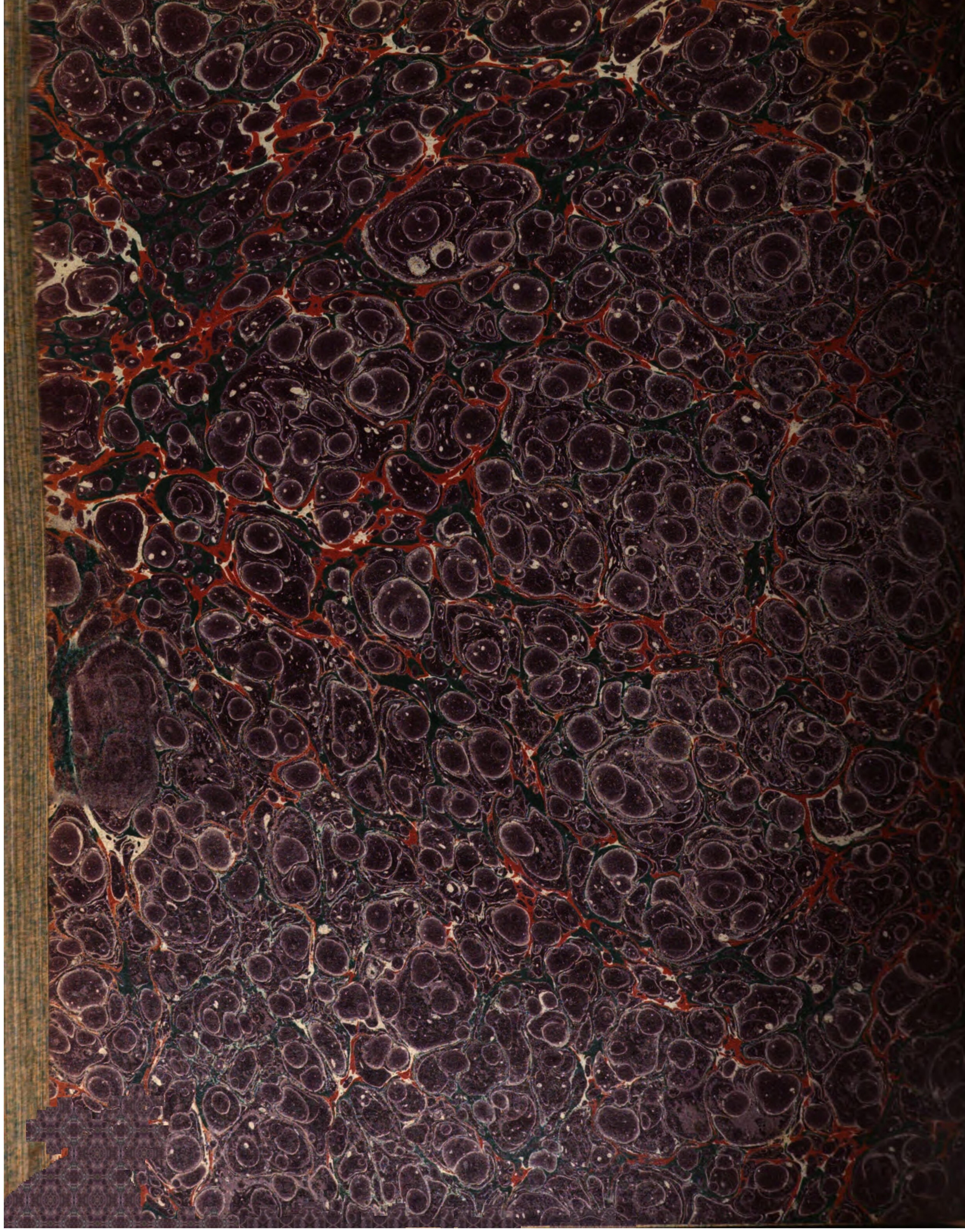
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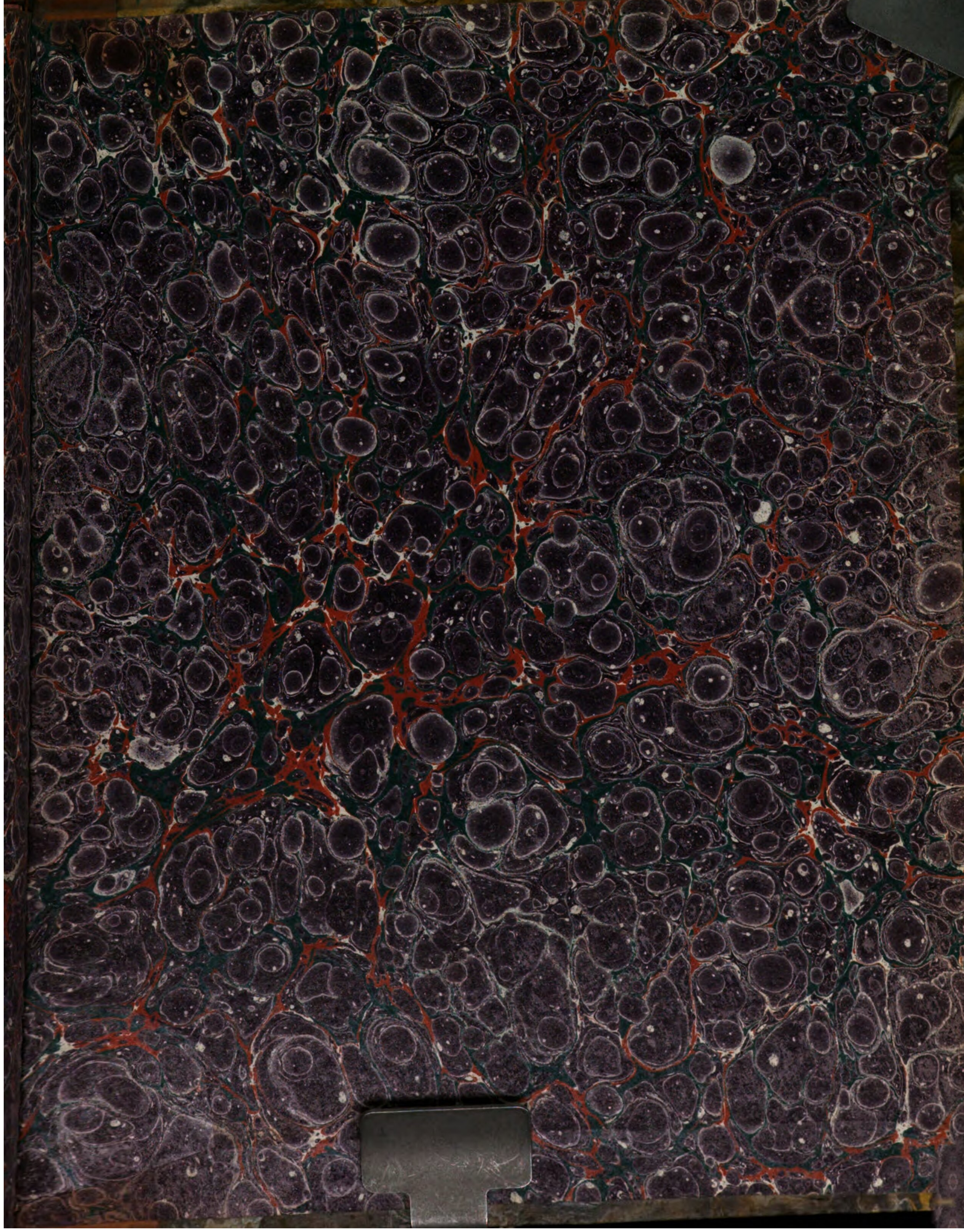
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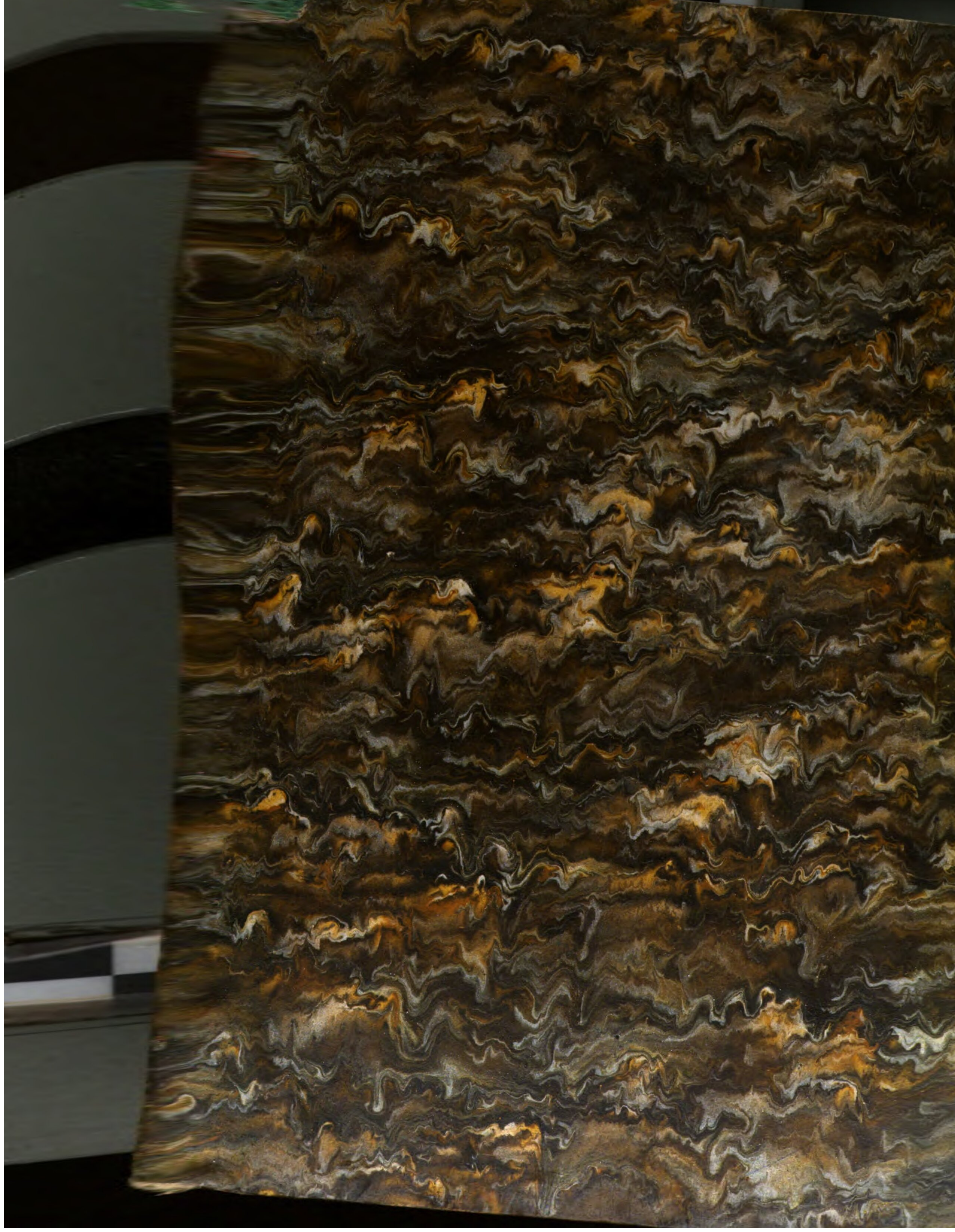
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